

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:       MANUSCRIPT CONTEXT AND LITERARY  
INTERPRETATION: JOHN DONNE'S POETRY IN  
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

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This project promotes investigation of poems within early modern manuscripts as an effective means to illuminate contemporary perspectives on writers and their works. With few methods available for accessing Renaissance readers' explications of multivalent and frequently encoded texts, I emphasize analysis of certain literary manuscripts as a method for considering how readers encountered, grouped, and interpreted verse. Interpretive evidence often appears in elements such as the sequence of items chosen for inclusion, paratexts, titles, ascriptions, even watermarks. Extant manuscripts containing copies of poems by Donne, who (like many contemporary poets) composed verse almost exclusively for a manuscript medium, prove fruitful for exploring this thesis because more of his verse circulated in manuscript than any other Renaissance poet's. The first chapter provides a methodology for such study, while the remaining chapters demonstrate how this research perspective alters our understanding of Donne's satiric, religious, and dubious verse. In the second chapter, study of components such as the title-page and scripts in a composite Folger collection suggests that at least one seventeenth-century reader interpreted *Metempsychosis* as a satire on court favorites, specifically Elizabeth I's advisor Robert Cecil, thus offering insight into one of Donne's

most confusing poems. The third chapter reveals that investigation of apocrypha within original artifacts can reshape authorial canons. I argue that “Psalm 137,” a verse translation that editor Herbert Grierson attributed to Francis Davison, actually belongs to Donne. Through study of a British Library miscellany, the fourth chapter addresses the critically contested matters of manuscript attributions and Renaissance attention to “authorship” and demonstrates how analysis of bibliographic contexts for one poet’s lyrics can offer insights regarding other poets—in this case, Francis Beaumont, Thomas Carew, Sir Walter Raleigh, and John Fletcher, likely author of an important elegy on Richard Burbage. The chapter also analyzes a significant and hitherto unidentified verse epistle likely composed for Elizabeth I by Henry Wriothesley, third earl of Southampton. Generally, this dissertation depicts ways in which arrangement and structure of certain seventeenth-century manuscripts reveal clues to contemporary audiences’ perceptions of Donne and his fellow poets and interpretations of texts, enriching modern exegesis as well.



MANUSCRIPT CONTEXT AND LITERARY INTERPRETATION:  
JOHN DONNE'S POETRY IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

by

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## Introduction

### Manuscript Context and Literary Interpretation

What Printing-presses yield we think good store,  
But what is writ by hand we reverence more:  
A book that with this printing-blood is dyed  
On shelves for dust and moth is set aside,  
But if 't be penned it wins a sacred grace  
And with the ancient Fathers takes its place...<sup>1</sup>

John Donne's well-known encomium of manuscripts attests to the "sacred grace" that Renaissance readers awarded "what is writ by hand." Donne, not surprisingly, primarily composed poems for circulation within the manuscript medium and attempted to limit the distribution of copies to his coteries only: friends, fellow poets, patrons, and potential patrons.<sup>2</sup> In 1614, when Donne believed that he was "brought to a necessity of printing [his] Poems," he complained to his friend Sir Henry Goodyer, "I know what I shall suffer from many interpretations" by readers outside of these intended manuscript audiences.<sup>3</sup>

Modern exegeses of Donne's complex, multivalent texts are challenged by our dissociation from their historical and cultural contexts. Yet, our understanding can be

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<sup>1</sup> Edmund Blunden's translation of a Latin verse by John Donne, as cited by Peter Beal in *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, part 1 (London: Mansell; New York: Bowker, 1980), 245.

<sup>2</sup> Ted-Larry Pebworth, "The Early Audiences of Donne's Poetic Performances," *John Donne Journal* 15 (1996): 127-39.

<sup>3</sup> John Donne, *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour (1651)*, ed. M. Thomas Hester (Delmar, New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1977), 196-97. Though Donne never published a verse collection, Ernest W. Sullivan, II, has demonstrated that many Donne poems found their way into print during his lifetime (*The Influence of John Donne: His Uncollected Seventeenth-Century Printed Verse* [Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993]).

enhanced through uncovering how his contemporary audiences, particularly his anticipated readers, interpreted Donne's verse. Unfortunately, few Renaissance interpretations are available. Extant contemporary commentaries on vernacular texts prove uncommon, and, though early modern letters throw light on "readings" of certain lyrics, letters (like other forms of written material) were potentially dangerous: as Donne tells Goodyer, "in them I may speak to you in your chamber a year hence before I know not whom, and not hear my self."<sup>4</sup> Thus, the self-censoring required of Renaissance letter-writers challenges our capacity to use such comments as interpretive tools. Examples of specific literary criticism in epistles, marginalia, and similar forms of evidence in the period are relatively rare and frequently ambiguous due to their personal, cryptic, and encoded nature. The present study, however, emphasizes another means to access contemporary literary interpretations of Renaissance poems: their manuscript contexts.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, manuscript miscellanies provided the basis for most printed verse collections, yet literary critics traditionally have focused on early printed volumes (especially when developing editions of Renaissance poetry), in part due to the vague provenance and unknown scribes of many manuscripts.<sup>5</sup> Unlike many early printed editions, manuscript verse collections often were compiled during authors' lifetimes, frequently by members of their literary circles. In addition, various manuscripts, particularly miscellanies, apparently were constructed with great care: their title-pages, introductory arguments, and indices, among other details, reflect a keen

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<sup>4</sup> Donne, *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour* (1651), 114-15. In addition, epistles (like other manuscripts) could miscarry. Donne acknowledges this danger in *The Courtier's Library* with the witty, ironic title of a fictional book by Sir Francis Walsingham's henchman Thomas Philips: "Anything out of Anything; Or, the Art of deciphering and finding some treason in any intercepted letter, by Phillips."

<sup>5</sup> Most scribes of manuscript texts remain anonymous.



interest in and awareness of authors and their works. Increasingly, scholars such as Peter Beal, Mary Hobbs, Harold Love, and H. R. Woudhuysen have heightened awareness of the significance of studying Renaissance manuscripts through exploration of matters such as collections and their makers, circulation of verse in manuscripts, and scribal publication; and Arthur F. Marotti has drawn critical focus to examining lyrics “in their material specificity.”<sup>6</sup> Such seminal studies have provided the foundation upon which to build a more focused study of how arrangement, structure, and contents of certain manuscripts inform our understanding of Renaissance verse.

This dissertation illustrates the ways in which study of early modern poems within their manuscript contexts provides a valuable means for considering how contemporaries encountered, grouped, and interpreted poems, thereby enhancing modern understanding as well. The frequently overlapping groups of manuscript compilers, scribes, and readers left evidence of literary explications in elements such as items chosen for inclusion,

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<sup>6</sup> Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1995), xii. According to Marotti, “Though modern scholars treat [Renaissance lyrics] as autonomous pieces of literature separable from the circumstances in which they were created, such poems are best viewed first within the social context that shaped them and the system through which they were originally produced, circulated, altered, collected, and preserved” (2). His study calls particular attention to examination of the immediate neighbors of poems in manuscripts and in early printed collections. Issues surrounding literary manuscripts are investigated in Beal, *In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and Their Makers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Mary Hobbs, *Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts* (England: Scholar Press, 1992); Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); and H. R. Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). Beal attests to the informative potential of manuscript miscellanies, in particular: they can “throw extensive light on the process of textual transmission, on the general practices and assumptions involved in the collecting of verse in this period, on the way contemporaries interpreted texts, and on the nature and provenance of sources” (*Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, part 1, 248). Steven W. May has demonstrated the significance of studying manuscript miscellanies for Elizabethan verse in *The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991) and, building on the work of William A. Ringler, Jr., in *Elizabethan Poetry: A Bibliography and First-line Index of English Verse, 1559-1603*, 3 vols. (London; New York: Thoemmes Continuum, 2004). Grace Ioppolo recently has pointed to the significance of manuscripts for the study of Renaissance drama as well in *Dramatists and their Manuscripts in the Age of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, and Heywood: Authorship, Authority and the Playhouse* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006).

indices, even papers and scripts. Collections that contain verse by the extraordinarily popular Donne prove fruitful for exploring this thesis because more of his verse circulated in manuscripts than any other early modern poet's and because the *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* and *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* catalogue Donne's works in extant artifacts.<sup>7</sup>

Chapter One advances a methodological approach to examination of works within manuscript contexts through delineating and describing material elements that one must investigate in order to uncover clues regarding early modern literary opinions. These components include provenance, papers and how they were constructed into books, scribes, marginalia, titles, attributions, paratexts, and contents and their sequences. Because one cannot anticipate which elements will prove most informative for any given manuscript, all components require study. The chapter also examines how literary manuscripts have become increasingly important to scholarship on Donne and his fellow poets, particularly during the last two decades, through considering the role of manuscripts in the editorial tradition of Donne's verse.

Each of three subsequent chapters addresses a single matter this research perspective can illuminate regarding Donne's satiric, religious, and dubious verse. Chapter Two concerns contemporary readers and their interpretations of Donne's satiric poetry, specifically Donne's confusing "epic" *Metempsychosis* in Folger MS V. a. 241. The study proposes that an early seventeenth-century compiler-reader purposefully grouped *Metempsychosis* with the manuscript's additional contents (satiric dialogues by Lucian and a fable entitled "The Tale of the Favorite") because of a

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<sup>7</sup> *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne*, gen. ed. Gary A. Stringer, 4 vols. to date (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995-).

thematic link—the dangers of untrustworthy advisors. Investigation of the artifact suggests a political interpretation of Donne’s complex poem by a contemporary reader, thus reinforcing the critical contention that *Metempsychosis* satirizes Queen Elizabeth I’s intimate counselor Robert Cecil.

Chapter Three reveals how analysis of manuscript contexts encourages re-evaluation of Renaissance authorial canons in light of extant material evidence. The chapter reconsiders the authorship of “Psalm 137,” the only poem to appear in all seven seventeenth-century printed collections of Donne’s verse that currently is excluded from his canon. Herbert Grierson’s groundbreaking edition of 1912 attributed the verse translation to Francis Davison, based primarily on style. This study assesses both the evidence that purportedly points to Davison as well as evidence linking the verse psalm to Donne—particularly a copy in British Library MS Add. 25707 and four previously unknown manuscript versions—and determines that Donne is the poem’s more likely author. The chapter also identifies topical, thematic, and verbal connections between the poem and “The Lamentations of Jeremy,” the one scriptural translation universally accepted as a Donne poem, and argues that the verse psalm’s metrical form and authorial style actually substantiate Donne’s authorship, not Davison’s. Considering “Psalm 137” as part of Donne’s canon alters our understanding of Donne as a verse translator and our interpretations of his other divine poems.

Chapter Four addresses the critically contested matters of manuscript attributions and Renaissance attention to “authorship.” Investigation of British Library MS Stowe 962 broadens awareness of the vast body of works supposedly misattributed to Donne and calls into question some conclusions drawn prior to recovery of various extant

artifacts. In addition, the study demonstrates how investigation of bibliographic contexts for one poet's lyrics can offer insights regarding other poets—in this case, Francis Beaumont, Thomas Carew, and Sir Walter Raleigh, among others. The manuscript collection's reliability and accuracy, particularly concerning ascriptions, lends weight to its identification of John Fletcher as the likely author of an important elegy on Richard Burbage that has been relied upon for biographical information, such as the stage roles that Burbage originated and the cause of his death. The study also uncovers a significant poem attributed to Henry Wriothesley, third earl of Southampton—an important political figure previously unknown as a poet, as well as dedicatee of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* and potential intended audience for Shakespeare's sonnets. The verse appears to represent an epistle for Elizabeth I composed by Southampton from the Tower, where he awaited execution for his participation in the uprising of Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex. The poem's speaker begs the queen to spare his life. If Southampton did compose the verse, as the copy's manuscript context suggests, perhaps the poem influenced Elizabeth's decision to let Southampton remain alive in prison.

Exploration of manuscript contexts can enhance, even alter our understanding of early modern literary culture. Such study can modify critical paradigms regarding established poets, contribute "new" authors, and inform explications of Renaissance texts. Heeding Donne's call to "Study our manuscripts," this dissertation emphasizes the analysis of various components of original literary manuscripts in order to allow the

unfolding of insights impossible to predict but essential to permit regarding seventeenth-century perspectives on contemporary poets and poems.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> “Valediction of the booke,” line 10. *The Complete Poetry of John Donne*, ed. John T. Shawcross (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1967). Unless otherwise noted, quotations from Donne’s poetry in the present study are taken from this edition.

## Chapter 1

### “Study our manuscripts”: Interpreting Manuscript Contexts

Goe, and catche a falling starre,  
Get with child a mandrake roote,  
Tell me, where all past yeares are,  
Or who cleft the Divels foot (lines 1-4)

Like “The Flea,” “The Canonization,” and “Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”—“Song” seems quintessentially “Donnean,” an unmistakable example of John Donne’s verbal wit. Yet, in 1660 the poem was printed among the verse of Francis Beaumont.<sup>9</sup> This erroneous attribution persisted: the verse appeared as Beaumont’s as recently as 1897.<sup>10</sup> In spite of these competing claims in print, seventeenth-century manuscripts reveal that most early readers believed Donne to be the poem’s author.

Ascriptions represent one of multiple clues available in manuscripts as to Renaissance readers’ perceptions of contemporary poets and poems, or, more generally, writers and writings. Bodleian MS Tanner 299, for example, assigns “Why was Sr Walter Raleigh thought y<sup>e</sup> fittest Man, to write y<sup>e</sup> Historie of these Times?” to Donne (fol. 32r), as do most manuscripts containing the prose problem. Thus, one might wonder why early editors—including Donne’s own son—excluded the problem from

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<sup>9</sup> *The Golden Remains of those so much admired dramattick poets, Francis Beaumont & John Fletcher* (London, 1660) (Wing B 1604), sig. G4r-v.

<sup>10</sup> Ernest Rhys included the poem as “A Song” in *The Lyric Poems of Beaumont & Fletcher* (London: J. M. Dent & Co, 1897), 70. However, editor Rev. Alexander Dyce did not include the poem among Beaumont’s non-dramatic verse in *The Works of Beaumont & Fletcher*, vol. 11 (London: Edward Moxon, Dover Street, 1846). Dyce remarks, “Among the poems thus ascribed to Beaumont are many to which he has no claim,—some by his elder brother Sir J. Beaumont; others by Donne, Ben Jonson, Randolph, Carew, Shirley, Cleaveland, and Waller” as well as others poets (441).

seventeenth-century printed collections of Donne's short prose.<sup>11</sup> MS Tanner 299's scribe seems to anticipate our curiosity; the work's title, "'Tis one of Dr Donne's problems (but so bitter, yt his son- Jack Donne L.L.D. thought not fitt to print it wth ye Rest;)," suggests that at least one seventeenth-century reader interpreted the seemingly playful indictment of Raleigh as more "bitter" than modern readers might expect. In addition to hinting at a Renaissance "reading," the title contributes an early perspective on the problem's textual history and seems to suggest John Donne the younger's concern for his father's reputation, perhaps tempering the generally negative modern perception of the son.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, one could interpret the title as a commentary on the son's concern for his own interests, through avoiding offense to friends or admirers of the late Raleigh or his family—a reminder that even contemporary interpretations remain open to interpretation.

Such insights stem from the title alone, but considering the complete manuscript contributes additional knowledge. Donne's prose piece appears in a section of the collection containing copies of significant writings by and about Raleigh, such as his apology for the voyage to Guiana, which reflect the manuscript compiler's interest in

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<sup>11</sup> Donne's problems were printed twice in 1633: *Ivvenilia or certaine paradoxes, and problemes, written by I. Donne* (London: Printed by E. P. for Henry Seyle, 1633) (STC 7043); and *Ivvenilia or certaine paradoxes and problemes, written by I. Donne* (London: Printed by E. P. for Henry Seyle, 1633) (STC 7044). John Donne, junior, released another edition in 1652: *Paradoxes, problemes, essayes, characters, written by D<sup>r</sup> Donne Dean of Pauls: to which is added a book of epigrams: written in Latin by the same author; translated into English by I: Maine, D.D. As also Ignatius his Conclave, a satyr, translated out of the originall copy written in Latin by the same author; found lately amongst his own Papers* (London: Printed by T: N: for Humphrey Moseley, 1652) (Wing D 1866).

<sup>12</sup> Scholars recognize the importance of the younger Donne's contributions to his father's canon but also lament his seemingly poor editorial habits, such as offering inaccurate recipients to some of his father's letters. In addition, he generally is considered a rogue—a modern view that reflects contemporary perspectives. According to a seventeenth-century reader, Donne the younger was "a son of both [Donne's] names, but of none of his vertues manners or generous qualities." (This note appears in a copy of the 1650 printed collection of Donne's *Poems* [British Library 011641 de. 102, sig. A2v]. The scribe probably was the same "Iohn Verney" who signed his name to the upper right corner of the title-page [sig. A2r]).

various works related to this historical figure.<sup>13</sup> This collection proves rare in that we can identify the manuscript's compiler-scribe: Archbishop William Sancroft.<sup>14</sup> Identifying Sancroft, whose occupation perhaps illuminates his diction ("D<sup>r</sup> Donne's" and "Iack Donne LL.D."), contributes to our understanding of Donne's extensive and varied seventeenth-century audience.

Investigation of material elements like titles and ascriptions enhances modern understanding regarding perspectives of Renaissance manuscript readers.<sup>15</sup> Like readers of printed texts, seventeenth-century manuscript readers added marginal annotations and textual corrections, but many manuscripts also display interpretive clues in the construction of manuscripts themselves.<sup>16</sup> Whereas the line separating initial creators

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<sup>13</sup> Items related to Raleigh appear on folios 15-32.

<sup>14</sup> Sancroft (1617-1693), once dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, became archbishop of Canterbury in 1678.

<sup>15</sup> Heidi Brayman Hackel's *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) has broadened awareness of Renaissance readers and their practices, adding to studies of individual collectors and readers, such as William H. Sherman's *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995). According to Sherman, reading was seen as goal-oriented; as marginalia reveals, the ends were either "textual" or "political" and combined "the surveying of available information" with "the collection of a thesaurus ('treasury' or 'storehouse') of useful phrases, images, and ideas" (60). In addition to frequently anonymous marginal annotations, "material evidence of reading" also surfaces in "heavily worn pages" and "faded ownership inscriptions" (Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*, 18). Hackel acknowledges that continued development in this field requires attention to artifacts, for "Printed books and manuscripts often preserve a palimpsest of marks by contemporary readers and owners, each inscription jockeying for ownership, each addition contributing to the textual whole" (17). She notes similar discussions of readers and material artifacts in Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999) and in Arthur F. Marotti and Michael D. Bristol, eds., *Print, Manuscript, & Performance: The Changing Relations of the Media in Early Modern England* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000). Harold Love also contributes to our knowledge in *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), discussing, for example, four primary seventeenth-century sites for reading scribal documents: the country house, the coffee house (first known in the early 1650s), the court, and the inns of court.

<sup>16</sup> Critical attention to manuscript readers has been hindered by several complications, including the wide "variety of people, practices, experiences, and even materials" associated with this "group" (Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*, 34). The sheer volume of extant manuscript materials, only a fraction of those originally created, also can limit scholarly investigation. Study of manuscripts and their readers often requires expensive travel to archives or, at least, access to (frequently poor) microfilms or photocopies. Study of such copies can rob the reader of valuable discoveries based upon structure, texture, or other elements of the original manuscript book. Peter Beal contrasts manuscripts with printed books, "which exist in multiple, wholly or virtually identical, duplicates": "Even multiple scribal copies of the same work, perhaps made by the same individual, are each a separate edition of that work, each one subject



from subsequent readers of early printed materials seems somewhat solid, Renaissance manuscript readers often became manuscript constructors. Thus, within a manuscript environment, “the specialized roles of producer and consumer that characterize print culture and the modern literary institution were nearly meaningless.”<sup>17</sup> Interpretive evidence generated by overlapping groups of authors, scribes, collectors, compilers, and readers appear in many manuscripts: in the items chosen for inclusion, the manner in which these contents were organized and prepared, and the extensiveness and accuracy of paratextual materials.<sup>18</sup> Clues surface in tables of contents and indices. Even papers and scripts can prove significant in considering how manuscript reader-writers interpreted certain texts. Recognizing that those who compiled manuscripts provide signs of their reading practices within the structure and contents of artifacts offers a means for understanding Renaissance readers and “readings” through analyzing original manuscripts.<sup>19</sup>

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to contingent circumstances of production, readings and interpretation, decisions of presentation within given traditions, and the influence of contemporary readers” (*In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and their Makers in Seventeenth-Century England* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998], vi). According to Beal, we must whenever possible “handle the materials themselves—microfilms and electronic reproductions will not do” (vi). He points out that many manuscripts seem to have been purposefully left open and fluid, as though the scribes were encouraging future readers to continue creating the texts (25).

<sup>17</sup> Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 207. It must be noted, however, “there was no absolute separation of the handwritten and the printed” (Mary Hobbs, *Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts*, [Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1992], 25). Print and manuscript materials sometimes were bound together, for example. In addition, readers often copied sections of printed works into manuscripts, “forming composites that were neither purely print nor manuscript volumes” (Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*, 30).

<sup>18</sup> Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*, 207, 135.

<sup>19</sup> As Hobbs attests regarding the study of literary manuscripts, we must consider “as a whole each manuscript in which copies of poems by a particular poet occur, rather than merely consulting its indexes or those of the library that owns it” (*Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts*, 6). Hobbs also emphasizes the importance of studying entire manuscripts instead of raiding them for “good” texts (and ignoring the rest) in order to make educated statements about poets’ tendencies: “it would save editors the embarrassment of deductions about the originality or individual characteristics of a poet’s style or subject matter (even, let it be said, of John Donne’s), when miscellany after miscellany reveals how many contemporary versifiers wrote within the same common traditions” (145).

In order to investigate literary works within their manuscript contexts, in ways that allow various forms of evidence to emerge, guidelines are needed for choosing artifacts likely to afford such insights and for examining manuscript elements likely to offer clues to seventeenth-century readers' explications. This chapter advances a methodology for the investigation of original manuscript contexts and explores the growing significance of manuscripts to modern understanding of early modern literary works. First, we consider the increasingly significant role of manuscripts within the editorial tradition of Donne's verse. This study demonstrates that manuscripts that contain poems by Donne provide appropriate parameters for an initial exploration of manuscript contexts.<sup>20</sup> The remainder of the chapter catalogues specific material components that require examination and offers a standardized approach to the investigation of manuscript contexts.

### *Contextualizing Donne's Manuscript Verse*

Given the staggering number of extant early modern English literary manuscripts, a study limited to those containing Donne's poems affords several advantages. First, multiple early manuscript versions of most Donne poems are available. According to Beal, more transcripts of poems by Donne were made in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries than those of any other poet. Donne's verse particularly dominated manuscript miscellanies of the 1620s and 1630s—"the golden age of the MS verse

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<sup>20</sup> According to Beal, upon studying numerous literary manuscripts, "One's conviction becomes only more confirmed that Donne was the most popular English poet of the first half of the seventeenth century" ("More Donne Manuscripts," *John Donne Journal* 6.2 [1987]: 218).

compilation.”<sup>21</sup> Analysis of individual verse copies and their contexts could reveal distinct poetic “readings” or separate cases of similar interpretations, as well as other insights, such as precisely who was reading which versions of certain poems. In addition, manuscripts containing Donne’s verse have been studied by Beal and by Donne editors, particularly textual editors of *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne*. Yet, according to Beal, “Despite the huge industry employed in the past few decades in editing Donne, the study of his texts and of their transmission remains a field as wide-open as ever.”<sup>22</sup> With significant knowledge about many of these collections—including provenance, scribes, and contents—we have a strong foundation on which to build within a field requiring further study.

Literary manuscripts have become increasingly important to Donne studies, particularly during the last two decades, as exploration of their role in the editorial tradition of Donne’s verse demonstrates.<sup>23</sup> Donne’s early editors printed seven verse collections between 1633 and 1669.<sup>24</sup> Donne apparently had no desire to enter the public

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<sup>21</sup> Beal, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, part 1 (London: Mansell; New York: Bowker, 1980), 246. H. R. Woudhuysen also refers to the 1620s and 1630s as the most fruitful period for manuscript miscellany compilation (*Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640* [Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996], 158).

<sup>22</sup> Beal, “John Donne and the Circulation of Manuscripts,” in *The Cambridge History of the Book*, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 126.

<sup>23</sup> Elements of this section are drawn from introductions to editions of Donne’s verse, particularly Herbert J. C. Grierson’s influential *The Poems of John Donne*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912) and *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne*, gen. ed. Gary A. Stringer, 4 vols. to date (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995-)—a valuable resource for the history of Donne’s verse in early printed collections and modern editions. For more about the history of editing Donne’s verse, also see Ted-Larry Pebworth, “Manuscript Poems and Print Assumptions: Donne and His Modern Editors,” *John Donne Journal* 3.1 (1984): 1-22; Ernest W. Sullivan, II, “1633 Vndone,” *TEXT* 7 (1994): 297-306; and Dayton Haskin, “No Edition is an Island: The Place of Nineteenth-Century American Editions within the History of Editing Donne’s Poems,” *TEXT* 14 (2002): 169-207.

<sup>24</sup> Editions were printed in 1633, 1635, 1639, 1649, 1650, 1654, and 1669. On September 13, 1632, John Marriot “presented his book of Donne’s ‘verses and Poems’” to the stationer (*The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne*, vol. 2, LXXVI). Miles Fletcher printed for Marriot the loosely organized 1633 edition and the 1635 collection, which was more tightly grouped into subdivisions. The 1639 volume, also printed by Fletcher for Marriot, “is a page-for-page resetting” of 1635 (LXXX), and the 1649, 1650, and 1654 collections are three issues of the same typesetting—a fourth edition not very different from the third

world of verse commerce. As a preacher, he called for poets to stop wasting time “fayning notable images of vertues, vices, or what els”<sup>25</sup> and to live that example instead: “He that desires to *Print* a book, should much more desire, *to be* a book; to do some such exemplar things, as men might read, and relate, and profit by.”<sup>26</sup> Though Donne printed only a few poems during his lifetime,<sup>27</sup> many others found their way into printed anthologies without his consent.<sup>28</sup> If, prior to ordination, Donne endeavored to collect his manuscript poems (in 1614 or any other time) with intent to print them, he was unsuccessful, for the posthumous 1633 *Poems By J.D.* comprised the first printed

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edition of 1639. However, John Donne the younger’s promise on the title-page of the 1650 edition that included are “divers Copies under his own hand never before in print” is fulfilled by the inclusion of a few loose sheets, also found in the 1654 edition. While the 1649 title-page maintains printer “M. F.” and publisher “John Marriot,” the 1650 version removes Fletcher’s initials but adds John Marriot’s son and successor, Richard. Miles Fletcher’s son James printed the 1654 edition, and neither John nor Richard Marriot is mentioned on the title-page; instead, the books are “to be sold by Iohn Sweeting,” bookseller and publisher of the 1657 edition of Donne’s *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour*. The text of this fourth edition of 1649/1650/1654 forms the basis of the 1669 collection, which generally preserves the organization first established in 1635; yet, the texts in 1669 “bear the marks of editorial handling” (LXXXI), including the addition of other manuscripts into the editorial process. John T. Shawcross argues that, though the 1669 collection makes use of the 1654 poetic texts, the edition “often alters spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and the like, in a kind of ‘modernization,’ or revises lines to create what was clearly supposed to be a smoother rhythm” (“Donne’s ‘Aire and Angels’: Text and Context,” *John Donne Journal* 9.1 [1990]: 34). John Donne, junior, was not responsible for these alterations of texts or the enlargement of canon; he died in 1662. The volume was “Printed by T. N. for Henry Herringman.”

<sup>25</sup> Philip Sidney, *An apologie for poetrie* (London: Printed [by James Roberts] for Henry Olney, 1595) (STC 22534), sig. C4. Donne might recall Sidney’s *Apologie* in the *Metempsychosis* introductory epistle: “None writes so ill, that he gives not some thing exemplary, to follow, or flie” (sig. A3v)—certainly “flie” in the case of *Metempsychosis*.

<sup>26</sup> Donne, *Sermons*, eds. George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson, 10 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953-1962); quoted by Jeffrey Johnson, *The Theology of John Donne* (Woodbridge, England; Rochester, New York: D. S. Brewer, 1999), 62.

<sup>27</sup> Donne allowed the printing of the *Anniversaries*, the “Funeral Elegy,” the elegy on young Prince Henry, and verses on Coryat’s *Crudities* and Jonson’s *Volpone*, though his level of involvement in the publication process is unclear (Pebworth, “The Early Audiences of Donne’s Poetic Performances,” *John Donne Journal* 15 [1996]: 130). Donne additionally chose to print some prose works, including *Pseudo-Martyr*, *Ignatius His Conclave* (in Latin and in English), *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, and several sermons.

<sup>28</sup> See Sullivan, *The Influence of John Donne: His Uncollected Seventeenth-Century Printed Verse* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993). Sullivan demonstrates that focus on Donne’s collected editions in lieu of “the uncollected printings has produced a significantly incomplete understanding of the canon, chronology, texts, audience, uses, and thus the influence of Donne’s printed verse in the seventeenth century” (1). Although Donne apparently “wrote his poetry as a coterie poet,” this data suggests considerable public knowledge of Donne’s verse through print: “once the poems began to circulate Donne lost all control over his manuscript readership” (21). For a comprehensive list of all known seventeenth-century manuscript and print sources for Donne’s works, consult the introduction to any volume of *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne*.

collection of Donne's verse.<sup>29</sup> This edition contains 148 accepted Donne poems, as well as two poems currently considered spurious: an epitaph on Shakespeare, which the 1635 editors excluded on the grounds that it was non-canonical, and a verse translation of Psalm 137 beginning "By Euphrates flowery side," which will be reconsidered in Chapter Three.<sup>30</sup> A few Donne poems were added to subsequent seventeenth-century collections, and the order of contents was adjusted periodically; the most noticeable sequence change was the restructuring of the 1635 *Poems* such that secular verse precedes religious verse, reflecting Izaak Walton's contention (in a newly added introductory poem) that the poet experienced a dramatic, absolute transformation from "*Jack*" to "D[octo]r" Donne.<sup>31</sup>

What role, if any, Donne's friends and family (and their manuscripts) played in the printing of early verse collections remains hazy until 1650, when John Donne the younger's efforts to obtain editorial control over his father's literary output proved

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<sup>29</sup> Grierson suggested that Henry King, Donne's literary executor, might have edited the 1633 collection, though no clear evidence of King's involvement survives (*The Poems of John Donne*, vol. 2, 255). See Sullivan's critique of Grierson's conclusions regarding the 1633 collection in "1633 Vndone." Hobbs finds it likely that King possessed a manuscript devoted solely to Donne's poems due to their absence in the Stoughton manuscript (*Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts*, 46). For a reassessment of editors' attempts to group manuscripts containing Donne's verse and to identify the sources of those groups, see Sullivan, *The First and Second Dalhousie Manuscripts: Poems and Prose by John Donne and Others. A Facsimile Edition* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988), especially 7-10. He discusses Helen Gardner's claim (*John Donne: The Divine Poems*, ed. Helen Gardner, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978]) that a group of Donne manuscripts labeled Group I derives from Donne's own collection, the result of his request to Goodyer in 1614 "to borrow that old book" (Donne, *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour [1651]*, ed. M. Thomas Hester [Delmar, New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1977], 197; from Sullivan, *The First and Second Dalhousie Manuscripts*, 7).

<sup>30</sup> According to Sullivan, only 148 of Donne's 216 poems appear in the 1633 collection ("1633 Vndone," 301); as I argue in Chapter Three, the 1633 edition probably contains 149 of Donne's 217 poems. "Psalm 137" appeared in all seven seventeenth-century editions and in subsequent printed collections until E. K. Chambers challenged the poem's legitimacy in 1896 (*The Poems of John Donne*, 2 vols. [London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1896]). Recently, Brandon S. Centerwall has called the authorship of the epitaph into question in "Who Wrote William Basse's 'Elegy On Shakespeare'? Rediscovering a Poem Lost from the Donne Canon" (*Shakespeare Survey* 59 [2006]: 267-84).

<sup>31</sup> This distinction stems from Donne's remark to Sir Robert Ker in a letter accompanying *Biathanatos*: "it is a Book written by *Jack Donne*, and not by *D. Donne*" (*Letters to Severall Persons of Honour [1651]*, 22). See Leah Marcus, *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), 195-98. For contents of the seventeenth-century editions and issues of *Poems By J.D.*, see Geoffrey Keynes, comp., *A Bibliography of Dr. John Donne*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

successful.<sup>32</sup> The son's contributions to the father's legacy are more problematic than one might expect. For example, when printing his father's prose letters, the younger Donne altered or added names of recipients (generally aristocratic) to many epistles, possibly hoping for his own advancement by relatives of "friends" of his father.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, Donne's son was the first to print over 300 items listed in Geoffrey Keynes's *A Bibliography of Dr. John Donne, Dean of Saint Paul's*.<sup>34</sup> Donne's son often asserted the authority of his printed versions by claiming to maintain his father's original manuscripts, though, if so, none appears to be extant.

Currently, over 240 extant Renaissance manuscripts, only a fraction of those that must have existed, contain Donne's verse, and many were compiled during his lifetime.<sup>35</sup> Some contain copies in the hands of Donne's friends; Rowland Woodward, for example, inscribed Donne poems in the Westmoreland manuscript, placing the collection into

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<sup>32</sup> An injunction against the printing of Donne's works without the involvement of his son was issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury on December 16, 1637, but no evidence of Donne the younger's direct involvement with the printed volumes appears until the 1650 edition, which contains his dedicatory letter to Lord Craven. See Grierson, "The Text and Canon of Donne's Poems," *The Poems of John Donne*, vol. 1, particularly lxiv-lxx.

<sup>33</sup> See Hester, Introduction, *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour (1651)*. Donne the younger also acted contrary to his father's wishes through printing *Biathanatos*, a complex prose work that demonstrates Donne the elder's erudition and argumentative skills through a defense of suicide. In the previously mentioned letter to Ker, Donne famously declares, "I only forbid it the Presse, and the Fire: publish it not, but yet burn it not; and between those, do what you will with it" (*Letters to Severall Persons of Honour [1651]*, 22). Richard B. Wollman argues that this remark about *Biathanatos* summarizes Donne's generally favorable attitude toward coterie manuscript culture ("The 'Press and the Fire': Print and Manuscript Culture in Donne's Circle," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 33.1 [Winter 1993]: 85-97). However, as Beal notes when discussing *Biathanatos* in extant manuscripts, there are other potential interpretations of this remark and of Donne's "Jack Donne" and "D. Donne" distinction (*In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and their Makers in Seventeenth-Century England*, 31-32).

<sup>34</sup> Dennis Flynn discusses the reputation of John Donne, junior, as editor of his father's works in "A Problematic Text," review of *John Donne Paradoxes and Problems*, ed. Helen Peters, *John Donne Journal* 3.1 (1984): 99-103. Although acknowledging, "As an editor John Donne, Jr., had many faults," Flynn calls attention to the younger Donne's 300 original attributions, of which 299 are accepted, in order to highlight Peters's radical decision to remove from Donne's canon several short prose pieces introduced by Donne's son (102). Also see Keynes, *A Bibliography of Dr. John Donne*.

<sup>35</sup> Though individual studies are found in various articles and editions, see Beal's *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* and *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* for extensive general information about manuscripts containing Donne's verse.

fairly close proximity to the author.<sup>36</sup> Yet, surprisingly, until the late nineteenth century these manuscripts were practically ignored by Donne's verse editors, though the early printed collections undoubtedly were drawn from manuscripts. Without ample explanation or evidence, eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century editors privileged early printed texts,<sup>37</sup> though "a printed text (with authorial intervention at zero) has no more inherent authority than would any other transcription and might, as a second-hand manuscript, generally have less."<sup>38</sup>

Herbert Grierson's seminal 1912 edition marked a significant change in the practice of editing Donne's poetry through emphasizing the importance of literary manuscripts. Building on the work of E. K. Chambers, Grierson examined multiple seventeenth-century manuscripts containing Donne's verse, significantly enhancing our awareness of such artifacts.<sup>39</sup> Henry M. Belden rightly praised Grierson's attempt "to

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<sup>36</sup> The Westmoreland manuscript primarily was copied by Woodward. It contains the only known copies of three holy sonnets: "Show me dear Christ," "Since she whom I loved," and "Oh, to vex me"; Edmund Gosse first printed them (Pebworth, "The Early Audience of Donne's Poetic Performances," 130).

<sup>37</sup> Jacob Tonson (1719), John Bell (1779), Robert Anderson (1793), and Alexander Chalmers (1810) based their texts on the 1669 *Poems*, a collection far removed from the poet. Henry Alford built his poetic selections in *Works* (1839) on the 1633 *Poems*, and most subsequent editors followed his practice by privileging this earliest printed collection. As Haskin notes, James Russell Lowell (unnamed editor of the 1855 Boston edition) was more of an "eclectic" editor, choosing freely from earlier editions, but in 1895 Lowell's literary executor Charles Eliot Norton reverted to the 1633 collection for copy-texts for the Grolier Club edition. Haskin argues that Lowell clearly "took Donne's poetry seriously," printing for the first time "a significant number of textual variants" ("No Edition is an Island: The Place of Nineteenth-Century American Editions within the History of Editing Donne's Poems," 174, 170). See "Selected Modern Editions" in *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* for complete citations of Donne's verse editions.

<sup>38</sup> Sullivan, "1633 Vndone," 298. Also see Shawcross, "'What do you read?' 'Words'—Ah, But Are They Donne's?" in *The Donne Dalhousie Discovery: Proceedings of a Symposium on the Acquisition and Study of the John Donne and Joseph Conrad Collections at Texas Tech University*, eds. Ernest W. Sullivan, II, and David J. Murrah (Lubbock: Texas Tech Press, 1987), 24. Derek Pearsall also recognizes the potential value lost when editors neglect manuscript resources: "the manuscripts discarded in the process of setting up a critical edition often deserve far more than the total neglect they are subsequently accorded, since they contain rich material for the literary historian. Manuscripts dismissed as worthless by editors of critical texts are often the very ones where scribal editors have participated most fully in the activity of the poem" ("The Uses of Manuscripts: Late Medieval English," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 4.4 [Winter 1993-1994]: 34).

<sup>39</sup> In 1872-1873, Alexander B. Grosart was the first to consider some manuscripts, although his decisions regarding copy-texts and emendations seem somewhat confusing. Then, in 1896, Chambers widened our

undertake a thorough-going classification and evaluation of the MSS and to ascertain the relation of the MSS to the printed editions and the provenience of the latter.”<sup>40</sup> However, Grierson did not consider using manuscript versions for copy-texts, which clouds his motives for studying them. He consistently turned to 1633 printed poetic versions, even for the *Anniversaries*—printed during Donne’s lifetime with his intervention. It seems that Grierson primarily consulted manuscripts to justify his notion that 1633 printed versions made the best copy-texts, though Ernest W. Sullivan, II, has convincingly portrayed their inadequacy.<sup>41</sup> According to Dayton Haskin, Grierson already had planned and worked on his edition before discovering the 1895 Grolier volume; Grierson experienced a “disconcerted recognition that the edition he had originally planned was going to be largely redundant.”<sup>42</sup> Thus, Grierson complemented his edition with extensive manuscript study in part to validate the volume’s contribution to the field. Whatever his motives, Grierson’s groundbreaking edition elevated the importance of manuscript collections through cataloguing many artifacts containing Donne’s verse and through providing numerous manuscript variants—a practice followed by most twentieth-century editors of Donne and other Renaissance poets.

Strangely, perhaps, Grierson and his followers did not consult all known manuscripts of Donne’s verse but adhered primarily to major collections. Ted-Larry

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knowledge of manuscript collections containing Donne’s verse, although he presented an eclectic text primarily based on various early printed volumes.

<sup>40</sup> Henry M. Belden, review of *The Poems of John Donne*, ed. Herbert J. C. Grierson, *Journal of English and German Philology* xiv (1915): 136.

<sup>41</sup> For all poems not in the 1633 collection but in subsequent printed collections, Grierson took his copy-text from its earliest printed version without offering concrete reasoning. In “1633 Vndone,” Sullivan catalogues the three elements that make poems in the 1633 collection untenable copy-texts: the volume’s “ambiguous provenance, censored contents, and bibliographically indefensible texts” (306).

<sup>42</sup> Haskin, “No Edition is an Island: The Place of Nineteenth-Century American Editions within the History of Editing Donne’s Poems,” 171.



Pebworth criticizes both Grierson and his editorial school for privileging some artifacts without explanation and for not providing complete information to readers:

Grierson worked not from an objective study of available artifacts, but to a large extent from a preconceived notion of where the authorial texts lay, and his determination of authenticity was based on aesthetic judgments rather than bibliographical evidence.<sup>43</sup>

Subsequent Oxford editors Helen Gardner (1952 and 1965) and Wesley Milgate (1967 and 1978) continued this practice by consulting only forty-three manuscripts, though many more artifacts surfaced prior to publication of their editions. Gardner expanded on previous attempts to trace relationships between manuscripts and to group them based on similarities of readings and provenance.<sup>44</sup> Though general tendencies can be distinguished among manuscript groups, Gardner's hypotheses seem to place Donne at the center of the dissemination of his poems in manuscripts, though no evidence suggests that Donne ever succeeded in (or even made ardent efforts at) collecting scribal copies of his poems, much less holographs.<sup>45</sup> When Donne's lyrics left his hands, they somewhat left his control. As Marotti acknowledges, "It is understandable that Grierson, Gardner,

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<sup>43</sup> Pebworth, "Manuscript Poems and Print Assumptions: Donne and His Modern Editors," 8. Edwin Wolf, II, criticizes Grierson's negligence in failing to look closely at commonplace book versions of Donne's texts. Wolf further argues that any decision an editor makes regarding a copy-text, whether printed or manuscript, requires evidence for the choice (*The Textual Importance of Manuscript Commonplace Books of 1620-1660* [Charlottesville: Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, 1949], 9-10).

<sup>44</sup> Briefly, Gardner claimed that Group I manuscripts result from Donne's effort to collect his own poems in 1614, and Group II manuscripts descend from a manuscript he completed around 1625. As Sullivan points out, Alan MacColl suggested that Group II manuscripts actually descend from a collection Donne sent to Sir Robert Ker in 1619 ("The New Edition of Donne's Love Poems," *Essays in Criticism* 17 [1967]: 259; see Sullivan, *The First and Second Dalhousie Manuscripts*, 7). Group IV texts consist entirely of poems in the Westmoreland manuscript. For overviews and re-evaluations of these manuscript groups, see *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne*; Beal, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*; Pebworth, "The Early Audiences of Donne's Poetic Performances"; Shawcross, "Donne's 'Aire and Angels': Text and Context"; Sullivan, *The First and Second Dalhousie Manuscripts*; and "A Note on the Texts of Donne's Poems" in Donald R. Dickson's recent edition, *John Donne's Poetry* (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 158-59.

<sup>45</sup> Sullivan, "1633 Vndone," 300.

and Milgate would want to see the hand of the author, wherever possible, in the establishment of texts and in the assembling of various generic groups into large collections of verse”; however, “it has become more and more apparent that the authorially sanctioned texts and collections are not going to be found.”<sup>46</sup>

Though “authorially sanctioned texts” may remain beyond our reach, editors of *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* currently are working to provide versions of Donne’s poems that take into account all extant manuscripts and early printings.<sup>47</sup> Led by Gary A. Stringer (general editor), Peabworth, and Sullivan, *Variorum* textual editors attempt to ascertain the “earliest, least corrupted state of each poem from among the surviving seventeenth-century artifacts” in order to approximate their ideal

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<sup>46</sup> Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*, 149. Flynn also criticizes the tendency of Oxford editors to make editorial decisions based (often without declaration) on biographical assumptions: “Oxford editors have not only used this sometimes unwarranted assurance about the facts of Donne’s life; they have also seemed to be arguing key decisions on textual grounds, when in fact their real grounds have been biographical assumptions, and dubious ones at that” (“A Problematic Text,” 99).

<sup>47</sup> Textual editors of *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* assert that Donne’s poems require fresh and extensive editorial attention, mainly because the extant sources are so rich: 239 manuscript sources (100 of which prior editors have not considered), three monument inscriptions, seven seventeenth-century collected printings, and 200 seventeenth-century books with 700 copies of full poems or excerpts (500 of which prior editors did not consider), as well as 20+ significant modern editions. In *The Complete Poetry of John Donne* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1967), editor John T. Shawcross attended to manuscript transmission, though he (like other twentieth-century editors) continued to base texts principally on the 1633 *Poems*. In terms of other twentieth-century editions, according to Peabworth John Hayward’s edition (1929) was not particularly useful but remains important because, after its reprinting in 1952 with a new introduction by Charles M. Coffin, it was the text used by students of Donne for many years (“Manuscript Poems and Print Assumptions: Donne and His Modern Editors”). Outside of the Oxford editions, collections of Donne’s verse were prepared by Roger E. Bennett (1942), Theodore Redpath (1956), A. J. Smith (1971), C. A. Patrides (1985), and John Carey (1990). Dickson’s collection (2006) includes *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* poetic texts (when available). *Variorum* textual editors clarify their purpose and procedures in introductions to each volume. Also see Peabworth, “Problems in Editing Renaissance Coterie Poetry: The Parallels with Biblical and Classical Texts,” in *Recapturing the Renaissance: New Perspectives on Humanism, Dialogue and Texts*, eds. Diane S. Wood and Paul Allen Miller (Knoxville, Tennessee: New Paradigm, 1996), 141-52; Shawcross, “Using the Variorum Edition of John Donne’s Poetry,” *John Donne Journal* 17 (1998): 227-47; and Gary A. Stringer, “When It’s Done, It Will be Donne: *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne*,” in *The Donne Dalhousie Discovery: Proceedings of a Symposium on the Acquisition and Study of the John Donne and Joseph Conrad Collections at Texas Tech University*, 57-62. *Variorum* editorial practices have elicited several responses, including William Proctor Williams, “A Variorum: ‘How It Goes,’” *John Donne Journal* 17 (1998): 217-26. Stringer responds to Williams in “More on Regarding ‘How It Goes,’” *John Donne Journal* 18 (1999): 267-75.

goal: “to recover and present exactly what Donne wrote.”<sup>48</sup> After choosing a copy-text, they edit each poem conservatively, rejecting eclectic texts (which arguably exalt accidentals over substantives) and providing minimal editorial intervention.<sup>49</sup> When multiple versions appear justified, all are given. Naturally, there are obstacles to their efforts, many of which they candidly acknowledge. For example, some scribal alterations actually improve poems, thwarting the “rule of *lectio difficilior*” and

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<sup>48</sup> Stringer, introduction, in *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne*, vol. 2, LIII, XLIX. When “multiple authorial versions” are justified, they aim to identify “the least corrupted state of each version” (LIII). *Variorum* editors recognize that they are unlikely to provide a non-holographic poem exactly as Donne composed it; yet, they succeed in avoiding substantial eclecticism through conservatively emending copy-texts and through explaining decisions to vary from “best texts,” even though their final texts did not exist in material form. They offer most verbal variants in order to “provide users with the data necessary to reconstruct in all essential respects any version of the text of any poem” (Stringer, *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne*, vol. 2, LVI).

<sup>49</sup> Editorial decisions and procedures in the *Variorum* should be considered within the broader context of twentieth-century editorial practices. When W. W. Greg broke from “the tyranny of the copy-text” (“The Rationale of Copy-Text,” *Studies in Bibliography* 3 [1950]: 26), editors generally began to abandon the traditional “best text” editorial method—as propounded by R. B. McKerrow in *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare: A Study in Editorial Method* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939)—for an “eclectic” method. Greg argued that a copy-text should be chosen for the sake of consistency of accidentals and as a starting point for editing but that an editor is obligated to make choices regarding substantives based on the available information: “an editor who declines or is unable to exercise his judgement and falls back on some arbitrary canon, such as the authority of the copy-text, is in fact abdicating his editorial function” (28). Greg also asserted that editors are bound to include variants for readers. Fredson Bowers added to Greg’s eclectic method a desire to seek an author’s final intentions, specifically through editing the last authorial manuscript, in order to reach a “definitive” text (see, for example, “Some Relations of Bibliography to Editorial Problems,” *Studies in Bibliography* 3 [1950]: 37-62). In recent decades, editors have challenged Bowers’s notion of an independent, isolated author; the pendulum began to swing far in the other direction when Jerome J. McGann (*A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983]) and D. F. McKenzie (*Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* [London: British Library, 1986]) called attention to the social nature of textual creation and transmission. McKenzie acknowledged editors’ inherent, unavoidable biases and questioned the editorial choices on which Bowers insists. McGann recognized the occasional nature of many poems, and both studies attended to the significance of poetic versions. Some modern editors, such as Robert D. Hume, have challenged both the Bowers intentionalist approach and the McKenzie/McGann sociological textual response, celebrating a middle ground that takes both sides into account: “Insistence on intention can be overdone (intention not always being discoverable), but at the opposite extreme a postmodern determination to ignore the author is even sillier. Texts are not self-generating” (“The Aims and uses of ‘Textual Studies,’” *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 99 [June 2005]: 205). Hume also argues to expand the “job of an editor” to “show us, insofar as possible, how the text came into being; how it took the form(s) in which we find it; how it was made public; and how it was received” (209). Generally, recent studies in editorial theory have reflected and will continue to reflect opportunities offered by advances in hypertext as well. For a useful overview of the history of editing practices regarding manuscripts in particular, consult Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England*.

challenging efforts to trace a text back to its “least corrupted surviving version(s).”<sup>50</sup> In addition, though we maintain many extant artifacts, lost collections could withhold vital information about a text’s transmission history and about relationships among collections. And, of course, there is the greatest obstacle for any editor of Donne’s verse: absence of verse holographs.<sup>51</sup> Yet, *Variorum* editors aim to establish reliable texts, to provide clear explanations for their choices, and to offer readers as much information as possible about existing material versions.

Efforts by *Variorum* textual editors have increased our awareness of Donne’s manuscript verse in multiple ways outside of their primary goals. They have added to Beal’s extensive studies by finding, cataloguing, and examining even more Donne manuscript poetry and by supplying substantial information about individual collections,

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<sup>50</sup> Pebworth explains this rule: the more complex the reading, the more likely it is to be authorial and thus replaced by a scribe with an “easier, more commonplace reading” (“Problems in Editing Renaissance Coterie Poetry: The Parallels with Biblical and Classical Texts,” 147). Wolf notes, “Editors are inclined to deify their authors, and in editing their writings attribute to the master’s pen the very best that can be squeezed out of a variant or an equivocality” (*The Textual Importance of Manuscript Commonplace Books of 1620-1660*, 3). He dares to admit, “it may be that some seventeenth century poetry was actually improved in the stream of transmission” (3). Marotti concurs and adds, “some authors expected and even welcomed the changes that recipients of their works brought to them, acknowledging the possibility that modern textual scholarship has been reluctant to admit, that texts might (accidentally or deliberately) be improved by individuals other than the original writers” (*Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*, 136). Editors cannot automatically conclude that errors (regarding citations, Latin translation, etc.) or incidents of “poor” writing automatically point to scribal “contamination”; authors sometimes make mistakes as well (W. Speed Hill, “The *Calculus* of Error, or Confessions of a General Editor,” *Modern Philology* 75.3 [Feb. 1978]: 253).

<sup>51</sup> Donne’s only known extant holograph poem is a verse epistle addressed to the Lady Carey and Mrs. Essex Rich. Additionally in Donne’s hand are approximately forty prose letters, four book inscriptions, an epitaph on his wife, and a few other jottings (Stringer, *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne*, vol. 2, XLIX). Although obtaining a holograph collection would prove very useful, it would not clear up all editorial confusion, for possessing a holograph only would confirm that Donne wrote a particular version at one time. This version could be a draft that Donne later revised or could merely comprise one of several versions composed for various occasions, among other possibilities. Bowers similarly argues regarding play texts, “If all Elizabethan plays had been preserved in holograph manuscript, the editorial problem would be greatly simplified though by no means solved” (*On Editing Shakespeare* [Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1966], 7). Barbara A. Mowat discusses the point in detail in “The Problem of Shakespeare’s Text(s),” in *Textual Formations and Reformations*, eds. Laurie E. Maguire and Thomas L. Berger (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998), 131-48.

as well as potential relationships between artifacts.<sup>52</sup> In addition, thanks to Pebworth, we better understand the performative nature of many Renaissance poems (Donne's in particular), which reflect the general lack of concern regarding textual stability in contemporary manuscript culture and the accepted practice of appropriating verse for various occasions and recipients. Such studies enhance our knowledge of Donne's coteries and of how his poems circulated among them, thereby complementing our understanding of Renaissance verse transmission.<sup>53</sup>

Through exploration of manuscripts and early printed artifacts, a *Variorum* editor also has drawn significant conclusions regarding early readers of Donne's lyrics. Traditionally, editors asserted that Donne's verse was known during his lifetime through manuscripts and a few authorial printings, but Sullivan has demonstrated that twenty-five entire and six partial Donne poems were printed prior to his death in various miscellanies and anthologies, many of which were aimed at readers who apparently considered some

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<sup>52</sup> See "More Donne Manuscripts" for Beal's additions to the manuscripts containing Donne's verse listed in his own *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*. Sullivan adds to Beal's manuscripts in "Updating the John Donne Listings in Peter Beal's *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*" (*John Donne Journal* 6.2 [1987]: 219-34) and "Updating the John Donne Listings in Peter Beal's *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, II" (*John Donne Journal* 9.2 [1990]: 141-48). Currently, Beal is expanding the *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* into an online database, the *Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts 1450-1700* (CELM).

<sup>53</sup> Also, through study of the Dalhousie manuscripts, Sullivan concluded that there might never have been a single manuscript source for the Group II tradition, which he argues did not develop based on a collection effort by Donne; instead, Group II manuscripts might descend from an Essex-Pembroke family collection, a gathering of poems given them for patronage or preferment (*The First and Second Dalhousie Manuscripts*). Sullivan proposes that "the monoscript ancestor" of the Dalhousies and Lansdowne 740 is Trinity College, Dublin, MS 877 ("The Renaissance Manuscript Verse Miscellany: Private Party, Private Text," in *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts: Papers of the Renaissance English Text Society, 1985-1991*, ed. W. Speed Hill [Binghamton, New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1993], 290). According to Sullivan, material details and scribal choices support the argument that the Dalhousie manuscripts were copied from Essex family documents; this discovery provides potentially valuable insights into the Group II tradition and the circulation of manuscript verse generally. Sullivan argues, for example, that the presence of "Elegie: The Expostulation" in this manuscript informs our knowledge of authorship: Donne (who served on a military campaign led by Essex) and not Jonson (who was not closely connected with Essex or otherwise represented in the manuscript) is probably the rightful author of the debated poem (293-94).

Donne poems “how-to” guides for wooing women.<sup>54</sup> Sullivan constructs a list of fifty-nine relatively certain readers of Donne’s verse, demonstrating the potential value in close analysis of material artifacts for broadening our perspectives regarding early verse readerships.<sup>55</sup> As Sullivan acknowledges, further consideration of manuscript miscellanies

has profound implications not only for the study of the authorship, dating, manuscript circulations, and texts of Renaissance verse generally but also for our understanding of the function of verse in the aesthetic, social, political, and economic life of the Renaissance.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Sullivan, *The Influence of John Donne*, 6, 26. Many instructional works probably aimed at lay people include poetry, such as Donne’s. A number of miscellanies apparently aimed at lower- or middle-class audiences primarily contain Donne’s “more risqué poems for their witty contribution to the general celebration of sex, alcohol, and tobacco” (32). Sullivan suggests, “Compilers of these self-help books used Donne’s verse as an educational and entertainment commodity, a product with commercial value to its functionally illiterate consumers” (46). Donne’s verses apparently “taught” issues such as art, the planets, how to write a letter, even how to pick up women. According to Woudhuysen, in Tudor England, “the ability to read was probably more widespread than the ability to write” (*Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640*, 10), though establishing precise statistics is impossible. Among those capable of reading, more could read print than script, and the ability to read one script did not necessarily indicate an ability to read all scripts and typefaces (Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*, 31, 60-61). Thus, some early modern manuscript readers were capable of reading certain portions of a manuscript but not others. The level of reading skill also varied greatly, ranging from reading with great ease to barely being able to spell. In addition, the line between reader and listener was blurred in the Renaissance: “many still read aloud” during this time of transition to silent reading (46), and communal reading was still quite common and “not merely a popular response to illiteracy” (47). This aurality “challenges what we mean by a ‘reader’ and necessitates a consideration of the role of an audience” (51). For more on the cultural shift to silent reading, see Roger Chartier, “The Practical Impact of Writing,” in *A History of Private Life, III: Passions of the Renaissance*, ed. Roger Chartier, tr. Arthur Goldhammer, intro. Philippe Aries (Cambridge: Belknap of Harvard University Press, 1989), 111-59.

<sup>55</sup> Sullivan, *The Influence of John Donne*, 26. These Donne readers include essayists, poets, compilers of verse miscellanies, translators, composers, dramatists, biographer/historians, an educator, a minister, and a publisher. Pebworth approaches known audiences from another angle in “The Early Audiences of Donne’s Poetic Performances,” cataloguing specific members of Donne’s audience that are known because of names or initials given by Donne. According to Pebworth, Donne provides the “immediate audiences of 58 Donne poems, more than one-fourth of the extant canon” (127). Pebworth goes on to list them, “A total of 29 individuals and one institution” (127-28).

<sup>56</sup> Sullivan, *The First and Second Dalhousie Manuscripts*, 12.

Clearly, Renaissance literary manuscripts will play an increasingly critical position, not only in the editing of poems by Donne and his contemporaries, but in our general study of the period, its writers, and its readers.

### ***Interpreting Literary Manuscripts***

Valuable though unpredictable evidence, particularly regarding contemporary audiences, appears in Renaissance literary manuscripts. Thus, attending to manuscript contexts throws light on how seventeenth-century readers viewed, collected, and explicated literary works by Donne and his fellow poets.<sup>57</sup> Through manuscript investigation we attempt to reconstruct various early readers' experiences, for "the material form and location in which we encounter the written word are active contributors to the meaning of what is read."<sup>58</sup> Proper study requires attention to a wide range of manuscript material details. "It must be evident," notes Mary Hobbs, "that all these small physical or external details of manuscripts are worth examining carefully,"<sup>59</sup> for "clues present in the manuscript itself" can enhance our understanding of relationships between manuscripts, as well as their proximity to certain poets and their authority in establishing texts. Because many more people could read than write in seventeenth-century England, even "clues" as small and seemingly insignificant as a fingernail impression could prove essential, making thorough examination of artifacts essential as well.<sup>60</sup> Manuscript analysis requires persistence and a willingness to

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<sup>57</sup> Although this study limits scope to Donne's verse, study of manuscript contexts can extend to many other literary forms as well, such as letters, speeches, and plays.

<sup>58</sup> David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 2.

<sup>59</sup> Hobbs, *Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts*, 142.

<sup>60</sup> According to Hackel, "even a reader unable to write might still 'take Note' by following the suggestions in contemporary treatises to make a 'pinprick' or an impression with a fingernail next to difficult or notable

scrutinize every element that might afford evidence. Thus, we must prioritize collections in order to determine which artifacts seem most likely to offer insights.

With literary, historical, and socio-cultural knowledge appearing in unlikely places, choosing which literary manuscripts to investigate can prove difficult. Degrees of attention and accuracy in extant manuscripts vary considerably, for skill levels varied as much among private and professional scribes as they did among early print compositors, and many manuscript compilers maintained a simple goal: to collect interesting items. Some manuscripts were prepared haphazardly, without attention to connections of theme or subject among contents, without attention to sequence or overall organization, without even a need for accuracy. And professional scribes rarely made deliberate decisions on such issues, for they typically viewed their primary responsibility to be the faithful copying of their source materials. Certainly, indiscriminately organized manuscripts still can offer windows into Renaissance reading practices, but, when attempting to sift through the corpus of manuscripts in order to begin the process of detailed and focused material analysis, we benefit from drawing some parameters.

Naturally, manuscripts already considered significant, particularly those with known compilers and provenance, could provide insights. Yet, provenance often proves hazier than expected. Take, for example, Leicestershire Record Office DG7/Lit. 2, generally known as the Burley manuscript—a significant collection once believed to be lost to fire and later believed simply to be lost, only to be re-discovered in recent decades and deposited in Leicester. Because a scholar studying Sir Henry Wotton noticed within this manuscript the hand of William Parkhurst, secretary to Wotton, he labeled the

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passages” (*Reading Material in Early Modern England*, 62). Thus, seeing a “pinprick” could allow us to recognize complexity in or popularity of a passage that we might otherwise overlook.



manuscript Wotton's commonplace book.<sup>61</sup> This assertion affected numerous editorial decisions regarding the Burley manuscript's texts, particularly those of poems and prose composed by Donne and supposedly sent to Wotton while his sometime friend served as ambassador to Venice. While such suggestions might prove accurate, they rely on assertions regarding provenance that seem tenuous, for manuscript contents complicate the cataloguing of this volume as Wotton's commonplace book (or even as a commonplace book, generally). Certainly, information regarding manuscript provenance can prove both valid and valuable, but the case of the Burley manuscript reminds us that provenance comprises only one tool of many that should be employed in evaluating manuscripts.

In addition, manuscripts that upon initial inspection seem to have been constructed with great care, even purpose, serve as stronger candidates for detailed investigation than those that probably were not. Some manuscript compilers afforded their books significant attention, going to great lengths to provide well-organized, reliable collections and to offer high-quality texts and accurate ascriptions. Consideration of such artifacts, particularly manuscript miscellanies, prompts a number of potentially valuable queries. What did the collectors choose to include in terms of genres, authors, and connections of theme or subject? Was the collection likely intended for private use only? In what order are the texts presented, and do the texts generally appear sound? Was the volume prepared by a professional scribe? Are there tables of contents and/or indices, and, if so, are they accurate? These questions constitute only a fraction of those offered

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<sup>61</sup> Logan Pearsall Smith, ed., *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), especially 489-500. Also see Peter Redford, "Correspondence in the Burley Manuscript: A Conjecture," *John Donne Journal* 23 (2004): 249-56. I am grateful to Dennis Flynn for offering insights in conversation regarding this manuscript.

when re-contextualizing a Renaissance poem. While some manuscript studies offer readily apparent questions and answers, others contain evidence that, although not immediately instructive, could prove valuable to later investigations.

To examine seventeenth-century literary manuscripts holistically, we must, perhaps paradoxically, outline individual manuscript components in need of study in order to establish a methodological approach to manuscript context investigation. I do not purport that the list of manuscript elements provided below be comprehensive. But it does delineate specific elements that have proven critical in my efforts to unearth contemporary verse interpretations from extant manuscripts, an endeavor that happily has led to clues left behind by seventeenth-century readers regarding their opinions on multiple issues, such as authorship and patronage. Consistent attention to these components provides an organizational structure (one that perhaps future studies will expand) for analysis of manuscript contexts. Though detailed study of seemingly reliable artifacts will not yield significant contemporary responses in every case, returning poems to their Renaissance manuscript contexts often yields unexpected but fruitful historical and literary knowledge.

1. **Provenance:** Although “provenance is not necessarily an indication of textual authority” since poems owned by families well known to a poet still might have been copied at several stages of remove from original versions,<sup>62</sup> provenance can prove valuable in multiple ways. Rarely do we know all elements of provenance, but we benefit from investigating who compiled a manuscript and where, which person or persons originally owned the manuscript, who might have read and possibly even

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<sup>62</sup> Beal, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, part 1, 247.

contributed to it, where it was located in the seventeenth century and thereafter, and who purchased the manuscript from whom up to its current owners. Such details can be gathered from notes found in the manuscript, sales records, guides to manuscript collections, related scholarly studies (particularly editions), and library catalogues, among other tools specific to each case.

2. **Papers and Structure:** Examining paper sizes, patterns (folio, quarto, octavo, duodecimo, etc.), textures, chain lines, and watermarks aids in establishing a manuscript's collation and can prove crucial in understanding its purpose and history. A group of scattered papers bound together, for example, tells a far different story from a composite manuscript that contains materials that seem purposefully and carefully joined. Folger MS V. a. 241, analyzed in Chapter Two, is a composite manuscript containing sections written on similar but distinct papers, as watermarks and chain lines make clear. The compiler's assembly of these materials into one manuscript book provides insight into the compiler as a reader and interpreter of the complex Donne poem found first among its contents, *Metempsychosis*. Just as differences among papers can offer insights, similarities among papers contained within and among various manuscripts may also indicate and/or substantiate connections between collections. Beal notes, for example, similarities in readings of Donne poems contained in British Library MS Add. 25707 (known as the Skipwith manuscript) and Cambridge MS Add. 29 (known as the Edward Smyth manuscript). Upon close examination, I realized that some papers in these two manuscripts contain identical watermarks as well, suggesting the same paper stock and perhaps a shared

origin. Even if such similarities fail to provide immediately obvious benefits, we cannot anticipate how these connections could prove useful in the future. Paper study also helps to approximate a manuscript's date(s); unfortunately, watermarks can be difficult to examine and differentiate, and we must remember that writers often used stocks of paper over a long period.<sup>63</sup> But paper study allows for informed arguments that, when combined with elements such as scripts, frequently become constructive. "Interpretation," Robert D. Hume reminds us, "need not be bound by contextual facts, but frightful errors of an elementary kind result when interpretation is attempted in ignorance of how the artifact came into being and why it is as it is."<sup>64</sup> Analysis of a manuscript's paper(s) and the way the leaves are assembled can offer one means to avoid such "frightful errors."

3. **Scribes:** The potential historical, literary, and cultural knowledge one can amass through study of a manuscript's scribe(s)—professional, private, or both—cannot be overstated, as Beal, Love, and Woudhuysen have established. Unfortunately, though, scribes rarely can be identified with certainty. Analysis and occasional identification of scribes requires recognition of writing patterns, trademark flourishes, and various scripts, since scribes often employed more than one script, even within a single manuscript. Many miscellanies contain a number of distinct scripts, and frequently various scribes contributed sections over time, regularly leaving blank spaces or pages that were filled in by later readers, which further blurs the line between authors, scribes, compilers, collectors, and readers. We gain from studying their additions to

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<sup>63</sup> Beal, *In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and their Makers in Seventeenth-Century England*, 37. Beal also notes that watermark patterns sometimes recur.

<sup>64</sup> Hume, "The Aims and Uses of 'Textual Studies,'" 203.

and alterations of texts, whether made inadvertently or purposefully—a distinction not nearly as simple to ascertain as some editors suggest. Though scribes surely intended some changes as “improvements,” many were made simply to provide an acceptable text, but all alterations merit attention.<sup>65</sup> Analysis of potential instances of scribal appropriation also contributes to our understanding of Renaissance manuscript culture, in which collections were produced for the enjoyment of readers and sometimes (though not always) without the concern for accuracy prized by modern editors, who often assume that all early editors of printed collections shared this concern. Investigation of scripts also aids in attempting to date entire manuscripts or certain sections and in identifying relationships among collections, while leading to more accurate awareness of a text’s transmission history, thus allowing for better-informed editions. For example, Donne’s editors frequently consult the Westmoreland manuscript because Woodward copied it and included poems not found elsewhere. While danger lies in acting “as if it could have no errors,” identifying its scribe as a friend of Donne certainly aids in making editorial decisions regarding its contents.<sup>66</sup>

4. **Marginalia:** Like printed books, some manuscripts contain substantial marginalia. Naturally, marginal comments provide one of the best methods for understanding how contemporaries read and interpreted books, for marginalia regularly shows

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<sup>65</sup> Love suggests that scribes often believed that they had “an editorial as well as a transcriptional responsibility”; yet, he argues, “the intention behind such changes was not the scholarly one of recovering original readings so much as the practical one of offering a presentable text, able to perform its perceived social function” (*Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England*, 121). In spite of scribes’ normally “good” intentions, according to Love, “The capacity of scribes to turn sense into nonsense should never be underestimated” (313).

<sup>66</sup> Shawcross, “‘What do you read?’ ‘Words’—Ah, But Are They Donne’s?” 22.

evidence of “digesting, cross-referencing, and correcting.”<sup>67</sup> All marginal notes, even those that initially seem unrelated or insignificant, could become useful. As Chapter Three demonstrates, a signature at the bottom of a page could seem irrelevant at first; yet, the name “Edward Smyth” in Cambridge MS Add. 29 becomes significant in establishing Donne’s authorship of a poem that appears nearby in the manuscript. In addition, marginalia can demonstrate a manuscript compiler’s attention to detail. Scribes of British Library MS Stowe 962, discussed in Chapter Four, indicate connections between poems and add missing lines and stanzas—demonstrating an elevated sense of precision and care that inspires confidence in the collection’s general reliability. Even well known miscellanies like MS Stowe 962, scoured many times for textual variants, should be re-examined for potentially significant marginalia overlooked in the past.

5. **Titles:** Titles often indicate how readers interpreted works. Many scribes copied titles already provided, and separation of those created from those copied usually proves impossible; yet such cases still illustrate what a manuscript’s subsequent readers encountered. Donne’s poem beginning “Wilt thou forgive that sinne where I begunne” is entitled “A Hymne to God the Father” in seventeenth-century printed collections, but the same poem is entitled “To Christ” and “Christo Salvatori” in some manuscripts. Those reading a poem addressed “to God the Father” are predisposed to interpret it quite differently than those reading “To Christ.”<sup>68</sup> We cannot know Donne’s preferred title, if in fact he imposed one, for Donne (like many poets)

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<sup>67</sup> Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance*, 70.

<sup>68</sup> Pebworth discusses other interesting issues surrounding manuscript and print variants in this poem in “Manuscript Poems and Print Assumptions: Donne and His Modern Editors.”

frequently left poems without titles, though “compilers of poetry anthologies always felt free to title or describe particular items according to their personal whim.”<sup>69</sup> Often, studying a manuscript’s general practices grants some access into its compiler’s potential interpretations, especially since there was a trend to derive “abstract titles, illustrating general themes, from the more particular titles given by a poet.”<sup>70</sup> Titles additionally can indicate formality (for Latin titles often were applied to formal poems) or popularity of certain poems among contemporary readers, and, more generally, they can suggest connections between manuscripts. In fact, according to Hobbs, “The clearest signal of a relationship between manuscripts is the use of the same titles for a poem.”<sup>71</sup> Hobbs also acknowledges the potential for the study of titles to assist in establishing a poem’s date of composition or the context in which the original poem was written. This could prove true for “The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned. to *Queen Elizabeth*,” a poem analyzed in Chapter Four. The title offered in the reliable verse miscellany MS Stowe 962 not only attributes the poem to Southampton, dedicatee of Shakespeare’s narrative poems, but provides the recipient of this seeming verse epistle (Queen Elizabeth I) and the historical moment of its writing (the earl’s 1601 imprisonment in the Tower, where he awaited execution for treason).

6. **Ascriptions:** Renaissance collectors and scribes credited particular writers with particular works for a multitude of reasons. In some cases collectors were certain (or nearly certain) about who composed a particular text; sometimes the compiler was

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<sup>69</sup> Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*, 150.

<sup>70</sup> Hobbs, *Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts*, 134.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 130; generally, see 130-34.

also the writer.<sup>72</sup> But some collectors (and some scribes) made educated or haphazard guesses about authors, either if ascriptions were not included in the source or if the collector or scribe believed the attributions to be wrong. And collectors frequently chose to re-attribute works in order to take credit for themselves or for more complicated purposes. At times, scribes simply copied ascriptions, spurious or not. In addition, not all names or initials offered with poems assign authorship; they can indicate persons such as the supplier of the verse, the collector, or the scribe. Yet, studying ascriptions (both accurate and not) can prove valuable in evaluating collectors' and scribes' attention to poets and their canons, throwing light on the multitude of anonymous and dubious Renaissance poems extant in manuscripts, as Chapter Four demonstrates. In fact, the study attests to Scott Nixon's argument that "Manuscript ascriptions, especially in miscellanies, have been unjustly stigmatized as unreliable for the purpose of determining authorship."<sup>73</sup> Chapter Three also calls attention to the significance of such study: for an unknown reason Ralph Crane attributed "Psalm 137" to Francis Davison instead of Donne, though we have no other evidence linking the poem to Davison and multiple manuscripts assigning the poem to Donne, in addition to its appearance in all seventeenth-century printed collections of Donne's verse. Yet, due to this one scribe's attribution (or misattribution, I argue), Grierson's edition excluded the poem from Donne's canon, a course followed in all twentieth-century editions of Donne's verse. Manuscript

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<sup>72</sup> In a letter to *Times Literary Supplement*, Beal notes, "Names become associated with poems in these miscellanies for a variety of reasons besides simple authorship. A man's name might become linked with a poem in the course of manuscript transmission because he was the copyist, or because it was written by someone in his circle, or because he added his own stanzas to it; or wrote a reply to it, or set it to music, and so on. There is usually a reason for the association—scribes were not wont to pluck names out of the air at random" (Jan. 3, 1986, 13).

<sup>73</sup> Scott Nixon, "A Reading of Thomas Carew in Manuscript" (PhD diss., St. John's College, Oxford, 1996), 2.



attributions, especially when combined with analysis of other elements, can contribute to (among other things) our knowledge of authors' canons and readers' perceptions.

7. **Paratexts:** The significance of printed paratexts has been highlighted in previous studies: "we should pay attention to the 'front matter' of early printed books, since such features as frontispieces, title pages, dedications, epistles, and commendatory verse historically mediated texts in revealing ways."<sup>74</sup> But many manuscripts also contain paratextual elements, all with potential to illuminate how and why a manuscript was constructed. Clearly, study of manuscript paratexts adds to our knowledge regarding issues such as patronage, but it also provides evidence of contemporary interpretations. Chapter Two presents a clear example involving a title-page; its presence and structure point to a specific, political interpretation of a poem within the manuscript, whose contents the compiler apparently grouped based on a thematic connection. Likewise, the presence of a table of contents or an index often denotes a scribe's or compiler's attention to organization. In cases of scribal publication, we might ask what value the scribe thought such a list would have to a consumer. Among private collectors, a manuscript was not considered a loose group of miscellaneous works to a reader who chose to create a table or index; it was rather a unit whose contents (and their sequence) were noteworthy and highlighted for convenient reference. Differences between titles or first lines in a table or an index and those appearing in the body of the manuscript can be telling as well. We also should note which works in the collection are listed and which works are not, for

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<sup>74</sup> Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*, 223.

absent titles could indicate late additions to a manuscript or a list-creator's qualitative judgments based on interpretations.

8. **Contents and their Sequence:** One element included in this category is close attention to the texts of works in question (in this case Donne's), including revisions and additions, missing sections, variants, etc., which can dramatically influence modern scholarly editions. Significant differences among scribal and printed texts might reflect much more than "corruption": they might offer early or late versions of poems or versions prepared for specific occasions. Unfortunately, determination of textual variants normally provides the impetus and singular objective for consulting manuscripts. Often, Renaissance verse editors search manuscripts for one author's poems from a canon built upon posthumous printed collections. These verse versions are examined without considering the surrounding works and certainly not all works, although thematic or topical connections among them could indicate contemporary interpretations, as Chapter Two demonstrates. Considering these complete manuscripts can contribute to questions of canon, call attention to potential relationships among writers and/or readers, and even uncover "new" literary texts. Some editors have taken steps toward encouraging study of full manuscript contents by editing complete manuscripts. Jean Klene, for example, in the *Southwell-Sibthorpe Commonplace Book* refuses to excise Lady Anne Sibthorpe's poetry from its original context, a commonplace book presented by her second husband on the occasion of their wedding. Her book contains a wide range of materials, including revisions in her hand and marginal suggestions by her husband, whose poetry the

book also contains. Klene edits this manuscript book in order to depict the “interaction between husband and wife” in the early seventeenth century and to show “copious examples of a poet at work,” contributing more than one newly discovered poet’s verse.<sup>75</sup> But the accompanying contents preserved in their original order can be significant for non-holograph manuscripts as well, as Shawcross reminds us: “The position of a poem alongside other poems may be meaningful, to the reader at least, even if not so intentionally arranged by an author.” He clarifies,

as the reader moves from one poem...to another, various comparisons or contrasts or developments of these poetic elements may be experienced, and thus its ‘context’ rather than its being read in isolation may offer meaning.<sup>76</sup>

This certainly proves true for Donne’s verse, for, as Beal attests, Donne poems selected for inclusion in manuscripts and their arrangement in conjunction with non-Donne verses provide essential information regarding their source collections.<sup>77</sup> Love reiterates,

The possibilities of interpretation open to an early reader would always have been governed by the wider context provided by the miscellanies, and the fact that particular poems would tend to cluster with others from the same circles. Any attempt to enter that first reading experience must always take account of the company poems were accustomed to keep.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Lady Anne Southwell, *The Southwell-Sibthorpe Commonplace Book: Folger Ms. V.b. 198*, ed. Jean Klene (Tempe, Arizona: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1997), xii, xxvii.

<sup>76</sup> Shawcross, “Donne’s ‘Aire and Angels’: Text and Context,” 34. Also see Shawcross, “The Arrangement and Order of John Donne’s Poems,” in *Poems in Their Place: The Intertextuality and Order of Poetic Collections*, ed. Neil Fraistat (Chapel Hill; London: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 119-63.

<sup>77</sup> Beal, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, part 1, 248.

<sup>78</sup> Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England*, 6.

Exploring these manuscript elements assists us to “enter that first reading experience” of many members of the diverse, understudied group of Renaissance manuscript readers. Such study radically can alter our understanding of early modern poets and their texts. We return poems to their “company” to view them as contemporaries viewed them and to benefit from interpretive signs supplied by readers who shared Renaissance writers’ cultural and political moment. Through study of poems’ original manuscript contexts, we become better-informed readers, thereby enhancing our own literary interpretations.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Cf. Neil Fraistat’s argument for considering poems in their original printed volumes in “Introduction: The Place of the Book and the Book as Place” (in *Poems in Their Place: The Intertextuality and Order of Poetic Collections*, 3-17). According to Fraistat, “Reading poems in their place is, moreover, a means of rehistoricizing texts, returning them to a book that itself has a particular place in its own culture and society” (4).

## Chapter 2

### Cecil and the “Soule”: *Metempsychosis* in Folger Manuscript V. a. 241

Readers have debated the identity of “he whose life yow shall find in the end of this booke,” the final inhabitant of the “Deathles Soule” in Donne’s *Metempsychosis*, since the seventeenth century.<sup>80</sup> This complex poem describes the transmigration of a “Deathles Soule” from Eve’s apple through various plants and animals to Cain’s wife and sister Themech. In each incarnation the soul appears to adopt the evils it encounters, sinking further into degradation with each inhabitant. After Themech’s death, this “model” soul supposedly passes through humans until the time of composition when, the text suggests, the soul resides in an English person:

this great Soule which here amongst vs now  
Doth dwell, and moues that hand and Tongue and Brow,  
Which as the Moone the Sea, moues vs. (fol. 5v)

Ben Jonson held that the soul rested in Calvin, and Edmund Gosse, owner of one of the few extant seventeenth-century manuscript copies of *Metempsychosis*, later claimed that Elizabeth I hosted the soul. Few critics have challenged Gosse’s interpretation, but Brian Mark Blackley argues, in agreement with M. van Wyk Smith and Dennis Flynn, that the “he” (not “she”) whom Donne mentions in the introductory epistle to *Metempsychosis*

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<sup>80</sup> Folios 3v, 4r. All quotations from *Metempsychosis* in this chapter are taken from Folger MS V. a. 241. This line appears in Donne’s introductory epistle to the poem.

cannot possibly be Elizabeth but is, in fact, “the manipulator behind the throne, Robert Cecil.”<sup>81</sup>

Donne, not surprisingly, never identifies the final occupant of this “Deathless Soule,” though Elizabeth’s trusted counselor unquestionably was the individual most empowered to move her at the time of the poem’s composition.<sup>82</sup> As of August 16, 1601, Donne still maintained promise of political advancement.<sup>83</sup> Due to disagreements about this unnamed object of ridicule and other contested elements of *Metempsychosis*, Blackley proposes,

the work has tested its readers and the readers have been inadequate,  
possibly through misreading symbols or ignorance of some coding of his  
language that has been lost since Elizabethan times. But Donne has

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<sup>81</sup> Brian Mark Blackley, “The Generic Play and Spenserian Parody of John Donne’s ‘Metempsychosis,’” (PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 1994), 159. Also see M. van Wyk Smith, “John Donne’s *Metempsychosis*,” *Review of English Studies* n.s. 24 (1973): 17-25, 141-52; Dennis Flynn, “Donne’s *Ignatius His Conclave* and Other Libels on Robert Cecil,” *John Donne Journal* 6.2 (1987): 163-83. The 1635 printed edition of *Poems* changes “hee” to “shee,” and subsequent seventeenth-century printed editions maintain this reading. But the 1633 “hee” echoes all but one extant manuscript (Harvard College Library MS Eng. 966.5): manuscript evidence supports the choice of the 1633 editors. Smith argues, “it is surely inconceivable that the Lord Keeper’s ambitious young secretary would have either dared or wanted to attack the Queen, quite apart from the fact that the Epistle promises us a male protagonist. It is much more likely that while ‘the Moone’ here is, indeed, the Queen, the ‘great soule’ who moves her is not her own animating soul, but the protagonist, the powerful contemporary who is allegorized throughout the poem as the soul of havoc exerting its baleful influence on the world around it. The ‘great soule,’ in other words, is a power behind the throne: sinister, influential, but nevertheless rather ridiculous. This, exactly, was the contemporary view of Robert Cecil, Secretary of State” (143). While Smith’s explanation seems reasonable, one could argue that Donne does attack the queen through satirizing her relationship with Cecil and the power he holds over her.

<sup>82</sup> John Guy characterizes England in the 1590s as “a hydra, constantly sprouting new heads” because of little constancy among members of the court: “councillors and office-holders oscillated in the queen’s favour” (“Introduction: The 1590s: The Second Reign of Elizabeth I?” in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995], 2). Courtiers and laypeople wondered about “the whirlpool of relationships in which the queen and her favourites lay at the vortex” (2). That political flux subsided somewhat in 1596 when Elizabeth finally filled the position of Secretary of State (vacant since the death of Sir Francis Walsingham in 1590) with Robert Cecil, solidifying his position as her most prominent counselor.

<sup>83</sup> *Metempsychosis* is one of Donne’s few dated poems. Its August 1601 date indicates composition after the Essex rebellion but before Donne’s clandestine marriage, which took place later that same year.

disguised his meaning so well that even his contemporaries might not have perceived all of the work's potential.<sup>84</sup>

Yet, Gosse's copy of *Metempsychosis* in Folger MS V. a. 241 can provide evidence, even if indirect, that at least one of Donne's contemporaries read *Metempsychosis*—a poem that has challenged modern readers to identify its genre, as well as its meaning—as a political satire. Clues exist within the accompanying manuscript contents, which, it seems, were carefully and purposefully grouped. That the collector found connections between *Metempsychosis* and the other works in the manuscript is evident from what Neil Fraistat has called “contexture”—the arrangement of the book itself and each poem's relationship to its surrounding verse.<sup>85</sup> Though scholars have demonstrated the value of contexture study for many published books, contexture of Renaissance manuscript collections has not been thoroughly considered, mainly because authors often had little, if anything, to do with their preparation. However, analysis of manuscript contexture and other elements of a poem's manuscript context may allow for valuable insights into Renaissance verse, as the case of *Metempsychosis* in MS V. a. 241 demonstrates.

### ***The Manuscript***

Folger MS V. a. 241 is a quarto of 69 leaves.<sup>86</sup> The contents of this composite manuscript consist of three primary sections: *Metempsychosis* (fols. 3r-16v); English translations of six dialogues attributed to the Greek satirist Lucian (fols. 17v-67v); and a

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<sup>84</sup> Blackley, “The Generic Play and Spenserian Parody of John Donne's ‘Metempsychosis,’” 38.

<sup>85</sup> Neil Fraistat, “Introduction: The Place of the Book and the Book as Place,” in *Poems in Their Place: The Intertextuality and Order of Poetic Collections*, ed. Neil Fraistat (Chapel Hill; London: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 3.

<sup>86</sup> This section offers a brief description of the manuscript. For further details, see Appendix 1. Folios 23 and 68 seem to be singletons, and folio 69 is tipped in. The stub for folio 23 appears between folios 27 and 28.

potentially unfinished fable entitled “The Tale of the Favourite” (fols. 67v-68v).<sup>87</sup> Folios 2r and 17r are title-pages written in a hybrid secretary display script (possibly in the same hand): folio 2r reads “Dr: Donnes Μετεμφύχωσις. with. Certaine select Dialogues, of Lucian. and The Tale of The Favourite” (Plate 1), and folio 17r announces only the first of the six dialogues: “I. The Dialogue of Truth.” (Plates 2-3).

There are at least three scripts present in the primary sections of the manuscript. *Metempsychosis* is written in an elegant italic script and consistently appears as two stanzas per page, ten lines per stanza. Folios 18r-23v contain the first dialogue in a traditional secretary script with approximately 29-32 lines per page, while folios 24r-67v present the remaining five Lucian dialogues in another secretary script with approximately 32 lines per page; the concluding “Tale of the Favourite” (fols. 67v-68v) is also written in this second secretary script. All six dialogues are provided with prefatory arguments written in an italic script, probably by the person who employed the second secretary script as well.<sup>88</sup> No catchwords are found in folios 1-17, but folios 18-68 contain catchwords and contemporary pagination in brown ink.

Based on chain lines and watermarks, there appear to be two different papers present in the manuscript, those of folios 1-23 and 24-68. Ruling, pricking, and variations in marginal borders in these sections also support that two separate papers were brought together to form this composite book.<sup>89</sup> But unused sewing holes in folios

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<sup>87</sup> The manuscript also contains three endleaves, as well as preliminary and final binder’s leaves. Folios 1-68 measure 223 x 166mm. The leaves appear to contain a slightly red tint at the edges due to cutting and to the addition of a speckled red edge decoration. Portions of words at the edges of leaves, such as folio 8r, substantiate the notion that larger pages were cut after the writing occurred.

<sup>88</sup> The prefatory argument for the first dialogue is written on folio 17v (the back of the title-page), a page presumably left blank when the dialogue originally was created. The scribe who composed the remaining arguments and dialogues probably added this argument to the first dialogue to keep the format consistent.

<sup>89</sup> There is evidence of pricking in folios 24-47. There is lead or graphite ruling in folios 3-17 and blind ruling with faint pricks in folios 18r, 20r, 21v, and 22r.



17-23 suggest that the first dialogue and its title-page were bound together previously as a separate booklet.

In addition to the primary sections, the manuscript contains two other works. The text filling both sides of folio 69, which was tipped in, is a two-page essay entitled “Concerning Tragedy” in a late italic hand suggesting eighteenth-century composition. The leaf appears to have been accidentally inverted so that the verso page should be recto.<sup>90</sup> There is also a small leaf tipped in between folios 43 and 44 that contains a six-line satiric poem about lawyers written in an italic script.<sup>91</sup>

As for provenance of the manuscript, Gosse dates it to the first quarter of the seventeenth century from the evidence of the scripts and stocks of papers. The manuscript’s Latin inscription “Liber Rogeri Bradon. / Queritur Ægestas quapropter factus Adulter / in promptu. causa est, desidiosus erat” (fol. 1r) indicates the earliest known owner of this manuscript: Roger Bradon circa 1620. The manuscript was later in the collection of Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872), being Phillipps MS 18640, and was acquired in one of the subsequent Phillipps sales by Gosse.<sup>92</sup> The manuscript still contains its original brown calfskin boards but was rebacked, probably during the nineteenth century. The collection was included in the Gosse estate sale of 1929, and the Folger Shakespeare Library purchased it from Stevens and Brown in 1941.

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<sup>90</sup> “Concerning Tragedy” contains striking verbal echoes with an article by Joseph Addison in volume 39 of *Spectator*, April 14, 1711.

<sup>91</sup> The poem appears on the recto side of the inserted leaf, and some notes on “motion” and “velocity” are written on the verso side.

<sup>92</sup> “Phillipps MS 18640” appears inside of the front pastedown, as do “Donne,” “Opened 5 Ap 67,” and an illegible note, all in faint pencil. Written on the rear pastedown is “Folger ac# 410819,” and on the lower right appears “Mr E. Spencer.”

## Metempsychosis in Manuscripts

Folger MS V. a. 241 contains one of the eight extant manuscript copies of *Metempsychosis* and a dependable reading text of the poem. Although some editors once discredited this version as unreliable,<sup>93</sup> Grierson chose to incorporate readings from MS V. a. 241 into his edition of *Metempsychosis*, a choice Shawcross and Milgate followed.<sup>94</sup> Milgate suggests that this version of the poem, which he calls “G,” and another version of the poem “H” (British Library MS Harley 3998) descend from a common original manuscript source with peculiar readings not contained in the source of the other manuscript copies.<sup>95</sup> He argues that the other six manuscript versions ultimately derive from a “common source, a copy of the poem that was in some ways defective and that could not have been the source of either *G* or *H*.”<sup>96</sup> The Folger MS V. a. 241 version, Milgate suggests, was “made with only reasonable care” and therefore is more appropriate to consult for “correction of the deficiencies in the large collections.” However, he believes that “G” preserves the only right reading of line 137 (“to see the Prince, and haue soe fild the way” [fol. 7r]) and that there are “Twenty other readings G shares only with H, of which most are certainly right, and none can be proved wrong.”<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Gosse claims, “This is a copy, not very intelligently made, either from the poet’s handwriting or from an early transcript of the same. It presents some fifty or sixty slight variants, many of them obvious misreadings, but several which are distinct improvements upon the printed text, and one or two which actually clear up difficulties in the latter” (*The Life and Letters of John Donne, Dean of St. Paul’s*, vol. 1 [Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1959; reprint of Dodd, Mead and Company, 1899], 140-41).

<sup>94</sup> *The Poems of John Donne*, ed. Herbert J. C. Grierson, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1912); *The Complete Poetry of John Donne*, ed. John T. Shawcross (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1967); *John Donne: The Satires, Epigrams, and Verse Letters*, ed. W. Milgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967). Grierson calls this version “the most valuable manuscript copy of this poem” (vol. 1, xii).

<sup>95</sup> The poem also appears in the following six manuscripts: Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 877; Norton manuscript 4503 (Houghton MS Eng. 966.3); the Puckering manuscript (Trinity College Library, Cambridge, MS R.3.12); the Denbigh manuscript (British Library MS Add. 18647); the Cambridge Balam manuscript (Cambridge University Library MS Add. 5778c); and the O’Flahertie manuscript (Houghton MS Eng. 966.5).

<sup>96</sup> Milgate, ed., *John Donne: The Satires, Epigrams, and Verse Letters*, lxii.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, lxiii.

Editors of *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* grant this manuscript version considerable credit: it will serve as their copy-text for *Metempsychosis* in a forthcoming volume.

But, “right” readings aside, this version of *Metempsychosis* compels our interest on other grounds: its manuscript context. At first the contents appear totally unrelated, works copied in several scripts on distinct papers that were grouped and bound, it might appear, by chance. Unrelated materials often were gathered in manuscript books in this way, as seen in MS Harley 3998, where an incomplete version of *Metempsychosis* written in a neat italic hand is found on folios 154-67, between a series of short essays in another hand on various matters (such as bowling) and a letter in yet another hand regarding the Oath of Conformity.<sup>98</sup> No other poetic pieces are included in the manuscript, and there is no apparent reason for the grouping of its contents.

Folger MS V. a. 241 is different: material details suggest that a collector assembled its particular pieces for a purpose. First, the arguments introducing each dialogue standardize the format.<sup>99</sup> As mentioned previously, unused sewing holes suggest that folios 17-23 comprised a separate booklet. The scribe who copied dialogues 2-6 and their arguments also added an introductory argument for the first dialogue on folio 17v; the addition causes this dialogue to appear to be the first of a unified group.

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<sup>98</sup> *Metempsychosis* is written on a stock of paper different from that in the rest of this manuscript. Beneath the last line is the signature of “Edward Smith” (fol. 167r), and Edward Smith also seems to have signed the top right corner of the first page of body (fol. 155r). The signature appears quite different from the scribe’s hand. The poem is not complete: the epistle ends with “None wrights so ill” (fol. 154r), and the body of the poem ends with “sister and wife to Cain yt first did plow” (fol. 167r). There seems to be no connection between the manuscript contents or reason for their sequence. They range from notes of “D<sup>r</sup>. Conant. his lectures at Alhallowes on fridayer” of 1657 (fols. 112r-141r) to a 1597 report on “The ecclesiasticall Discipline, as it hath been *practiced* since y<sup>e</sup> refomacion of y<sup>e</sup> Church by y<sup>e</sup> Ministers, Elders and Deacons of y<sup>e</sup> Churches of Guernsey, Iersey, Sarck, and Orkeny” since 1576 (fols. 203r-214v).

<sup>99</sup> Because the dialogues lack titles in this manuscript and the arguments appear to be original works, I have included each argument when discussing the accompanying dialogue. All transcriptions from the manuscript are mine.

The first dialogue begins at the top of a recto page (fol. 18r), while all subsequent dialogues begin just below their arguments (Plates 4-7). Also, “I.” has been written faintly beneath the title “The Dialogue of Truth” (fol. 17r), most likely to make this dialogue seem to be only the first of others.

In addition to this attempt to unify the dialogues, a scribe constructed an elaborate title-page (fol. 2r) that calls attention to all of the contents of the book. The title-page, inscribed “Dr: Donnes Μετεμύχους. with. Certaine select Dialogues, of Lucian. and The Tale of The Favourite,” effectively transforms the piecemeal sections of the manuscript into a coherent whole. Such a title-page—created by a scribe in order to draw attention to a book as a deliberately constructed unit—is by no means common among manuscripts. In addition, this title-page language calls attention to the purposeful choice of “Certaine select” Lucian dialogues for this book; the compiler apparently chose these specific works for a reason.<sup>100</sup>

If these works were purposefully combined, as the title-page and arguments suggest, someone must have seen a connection among these seemingly unrelated works. There are at least three potential links: connections of genre, motif, and theme.

### *Satire*

The contents chosen for this manuscript clarify one Renaissance reader’s understanding of the hotly contested issue of genre in *Metempsychosis*. While the poem has been categorized as “epic, allegory, mock- or anti-epic, Bartasian parody, formal

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<sup>100</sup> Because this title-page is found on the second leaf of the twelve-leaf quire containing *Metempsychosis*, it seems likely that the poem’s scribe left some initial leaves blank with the intention of adding other materials, perhaps a title-page and/or dedication. Potentially, this scribe served as compiler of the manuscript and actually created the existing title-page.

paradox, and essay,” Blackley argues that “the work’s true genre is that of satire, and the other prominent characteristics which relate to epic (and mock-epic) are not distinctions of genre, but of mode.”<sup>101</sup> The poem’s context in MS V. a. 241 supports this perspective, since the dialogues that follow *Metempsychosis* are satirical as well.<sup>102</sup> Lucian of Samosata (circa 120-180 C.E.) created a new genre, the satiric dialogue—an invention with elements of the Socratic philosophical dialogue, Old Comedy, and Menippean satire that “combines the philosophical inquiry of dialogue with the humorous mockery of comedy.”<sup>103</sup> Many of this Second Sophistic period rhetorician’s approximately eighty extant works are satiric dialogues, which present an ironic portrait of human degradation in the same vein as *Metempsychosis*, although often through a more light, comedic approach “to play upon the gap between a concept of normality which writer and audience share, and what passes for normality within the text.”<sup>104</sup> Lucian’s views on both philosophy and religion are difficult to pinpoint, but he addresses contemporary issues of morality, spirituality, and social obligations through satire and irony by placing historical type figures into fantastical situations. Lucian, like Donne in *Metempsychosis*, makes no direct reference to historical and cultural politics, but scholars claim that Lucian’s contemporaries often would have recognized the inspirations for his stock characters. Although MS V. a. 241 contains six dialogues identified as “Lucian,” the first dialogue is in fact Maffeo Vegio’s *Dialogue between Truth and Philalethes*, written in Florence in

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<sup>101</sup> Blackley, “The Generic Play and Spenserian Parody of John Donne’s ‘Metempsychosis,’” 24-25.

<sup>102</sup> I will refer to the dialogues by their modern titles. For more on modern translations, see H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler’s translations of Lucian in *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905).

<sup>103</sup> David Marsh, *Lucian and the Latins: Humor and Humanism in the Early Renaissance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 42. For further study of Lucian and his influence during the Renaissance, also see Christopher Robinson, *Lucian and His Influence in Europe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979) and Craig R. Thompson, ed., *Translations of Lucian: The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1974).

<sup>104</sup> Robinson, *Lucian and His Influence in Europe*, 20.

1444 but long believed to be Lucian's.<sup>105</sup> The five true Lucian dialogues lack titles in the manuscript but are commonly referred to in modern editions as *Timon the Misanthrope*, *The Cock*, *Charon*, *The Ship*, and *Icaromenippus*.

Through Latin translations of these and other Lucian dialogues, Thomas More and Desiderius Erasmus recognized the importance of these works and helped to promote Lucian's reputation in sixteenth-century England.<sup>106</sup> Yet, Lucian's influence on Donne has been relatively ignored.<sup>107</sup> Lucian gained popularity in fifteenth-century Italy when Latin translations of the little-known author began to flourish, but More (a relative of

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<sup>105</sup> The argument of the first dialogue reads, "Demaratus surnamed Philalithes, a Noble man of Lacedemonia, was driven out of his Countrey, for speaking the Truth, as well publickely, in the Senatt, as priuately to his Freinds, and flying into Asia, he addressed himselfe unto Xerxes King of Persia; out of whose Court he was in like manner expelled by Flatterers for the Truth, which hee still used to speake freely, w<sup>th</sup>out respect, whereupon hee got him into a desert mountaine, where he incountreth w<sup>th</sup> Truth, unto whom he speaketh in this manner" (fol. 17v). This dialogue depicts the difficulties of the goddess Truth, who is attacked by false flatterers who throw Truth out of court, leaving her forced to retreat to the care of animals. Generally, Maffeo Vegio (1407-58) is best known for his 1428 supplement to the *Aeneid*, but he also composed three Latin dialogues that demonstrate the inspiration of Lucian in external trappings if not spirit and color. Being misinterpreted as an original Lucian dialogue during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, *Dialogue between Truth and Philalithes* survives in at least fifteen manuscripts and six incunabula and was translated into Dutch, French, German, and Italian. For more on Vegio and other early Lucian translators and imitators, consult Marsh, *Lucian and the Latins: Humor and Humanism in the Early Renaissance*, especially 67-71 and 110-14.

<sup>106</sup> In 1506, Erasmus and More completed the first edition of their Latin translations of Lucian. This edition includes twenty-eight dialogues translated by Erasmus and three dialogues and a declamation translated by More, as well as More's response to Lucian's declamation. Subsequent editions with additional dialogues soon followed. Although More did not translate any of the dialogues present in this manuscript, Erasmus translated *Timon*, *The Cock*, and *Charon*, and later added *Icaromenippus* to their second edition (1514). More did translate *Menippus*, a counterpart to *Icaromenippus*. Both dialogues depict Menippus's search for knowledge of the gods and the universe through voyages to other worlds, to hell in *Menippus* and to heaven in *Icaromenippus*.

<sup>107</sup> Patrick Joseph Quinlan, however, considers the influence of Lucian's writings on Donne's verse in "John Donne's Satires in Light of the Lucianic Tradition" (PhD diss., University of Colorado at Boulder, 1980). Various scholars have analyzed Lucianic influence on Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* and *Colloquies* and More's *Utopia*. Howard B. Norland claims that More's method of blending theater with traditional forms of dialogue proves that *Utopia* was modeled more closely on Lucian dialogues than any other source ("The Role of Drama in More's Literary Career," *The Sixteenth Century Journal: Journal of Early Modern Studies* 13.4 [Winter 1982]: 59-75). Warren W. Wooden suggests that the central character of *Utopia* is a Lucianic satiric persona and that other Lucianic elements are present in the work ("Thomas More and Lucian: A Study of Satiric Influence and Technique," *Studies in English* 13 [1972]: 43-57). And R. Bracht Branham compares the satiric structure, ironic stance, and moral message of *Utopia* to the Lucian dialogues that More translated ("Utopian Laughter: Lucian and Thomas More," *Moreana* [July 1985]: 23-43).

Donne's) was the first Englishman to print Latin translations of Lucian (1506).<sup>108</sup> R.

Bracht Branham suggests that, at least in More's lifetime, "he was probably more widely read as the translator of Lucian than the author of *Utopia*."<sup>109</sup> More's dedicatory letter to Thomas Ruthall and Erasmus's preface to *The Cock* imply their admiration for Lucian's rhetorical abilities and aptitude as a moral philosopher capable of instruction and delight in the Horatian vein, unlike previous Latin translators like Vegio, who "merely imitated the outward trappings of Lucianic dialogue, such as the mythological settings and interlocutors."<sup>110</sup> One unpublished study argues that More's and Erasmus's satirical works demonstrate Lucianic influence and that satires by all three authors inspired Donne's verse satires: "while Donne's direct references to Erasmus and More are infrequent (to Lucian there are none at all), the similarity of Donne's satiric methods to his predecessors' shows his debt to them."<sup>111</sup> It is possible that a contemporary reader of Donne's verse satires would connect them with Lucian and, specifically, with More's translations because of the family connection and the similar satirical methods. The coupling of *Metempsychosis* with Lucian's dialogues in MS V. a. 241 suggests that its compiler classified the poem as satire.

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<sup>108</sup> There are few extant printed English translations prior to the mid-seventeenth century. According to Henrietta R. Palmer, only three separately printed Lucian dialogues—*Necromantia*, *Toxaris*, and *Cynicus*—are extant in sixteenth-century English translations, and none of these works is included in this manuscript (*List of English Editions and Translations of Greek and Latin Classics Printed Before 1641* [London, 1911]). The first collection of Lucian dialogues in English was translated by Francis Hickes and printed in 1634. This edition, in which Hickes claims to translate directly from the Greek, contains four of the five Lucian dialogues in this manuscript (*Icaromenippus*, *The Cock*, *Timon*, and *Charon*). After Thomas Heywood's 1637 edition, Jasper Mayne added his own translations to Hickes's work in 1638; *The Ship* is among his additions. Because the dialogues in this manuscript appear to have been written prior to 1620, the English versions in MS V. a. 241 could have been original translations, although they might have been copies of other versions circulating in manuscript.

<sup>109</sup> Branham, "Utopian Laughter: Lucian and Thomas More," 23.

<sup>110</sup> Marsh, *Lucian and the Latins: Humor and Humanism in the Early Renaissance*, 67.

<sup>111</sup> Quinlan, "John Donne's Satires in Light of the Lucianic Tradition," 30.

### ***Migrating Soul***

In addition to genre, the motif of a soul migrating through various bodies links these Lucian dialogues to *Metempsychosis* and to the concluding fable. Pythagoras's theory of the transmigration of souls was known during the Renaissance, most conspicuously through Book 15 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and alluded to in such works as *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Doctor Faustus*, and *Volpone*.<sup>112</sup> Donne's progress follows the soul through vegetable, animal, and human forms, and one host is a lusty male sparrow, a bird found elsewhere in this manuscript. In "The Tale of the Favourite" a king tells his most intimate courtier his deepest secret: through killing himself, the king can transfer his "first spiritts" into a dead bird, thereby bringing that animal to life for a time (fol. 68v). Then the king returns to life when the bird, a sparrow, passes the "borrow'd Soule" back into the king (fol. 68v). Additionally, in the manuscript's third Lucian dialogue Micyllus the shoemaker harasses his rooster for waking him from a pleasant dream of riches, only to be shocked when the cock answers him and explains that his soul has inhabited many bodies, including the philosopher Pythagorus, Aspasia the courtesan, many other animals, and even a king.

### ***False Flatterers***

The central connection among these "Certaine select" dialogues, *Metempsychosis*, the fable, and even the inserted satirical poem is topical and thematic: the dangers posed

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<sup>112</sup> See Faustus's final soliloquy, *The Merchant of Venice* 4.1, and *Twelfth Night* 4.2, in which Malvolio and the clown discuss the possibility of a human soul being housed in a bird. Also see Jonson's extended play on the Pythagorean doctrine (with allusions to *The Cock*) in *Volpone*, particularly 1.2, lines 1-65.



by false flatterers.<sup>113</sup> Common interest in the powerful “friends” of the monarch abounded in Renaissance England. As justified accusations of corruption (including the buying and selling of offices by court officials) increased in the 1590s, counselors were satirized frequently, and those believed to be corrupt were identified as “flatterers.”<sup>114</sup> But such corruption was not always evident, as Peter Lake and Kevin Sharpe contend:

The distinctions between good and bad counsel—the faithful courtier and the corrupt favourite—were crucial to the conduct of contemporary politics, but in practice it was often difficult to tell the two apart.<sup>115</sup>

As Donne remarks in a sermon, a “Prince” unable to discern “a flatterer from a Counsaylor” lived in danger and would be “taken in a net.”<sup>116</sup> Though separating loyal from scheming counselors challenged monarchs, the process probably presented more difficulties to persons such as Donne who (like most poets) lived far outside of Elizabeth’s inner circle and would have identified her corrupt favorites mainly based on their reputations and the opinions of prominent friends.<sup>117</sup> Donne, a participant in the Cádiz expedition and secretary to Egerton while the earl of Essex was confined to York House, likely was privy to highly unfavorable opinions of Elizabeth’s “little elf.”

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<sup>113</sup> It should be noted that several elements that may or may not be related to *Metempsychosis* also recur in these dialogues. First, Lucian’s metaphor of the world as stage, often borrowed by Donne, Shakespeare, Raleigh, and others, appears frequently. Also, Lucian’s well-known mockery of hypocritical philosophers, who live extravagant lifestyles while ridiculing pleasure and extolling whatever quality each considers virtuous, surfaces in each dialogue. In addition, *Timon*, *The Cock*, and *The Ship* depict a parvenu: “A figure of dubious origins, the parvenu rises by dishonest means, is notorious for his immorality, and positively profits by his ignorance” (Robinson, *Lucian and His Influence in Europe*, 19). Interestingly, many contemporaries held such a view of Robert Cecil’s father, Lord Burghley, who was not born into the aristocracy but rose to power.

<sup>114</sup> See Guy, “Introduction: The 1590s: The Second Reign of Elizabeth I?” especially 15-16.

<sup>115</sup> Peter Lake and Kevin Sharpe, introduction to *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, eds. Peter Lake and Kevin Sharpe (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993), 17.

<sup>116</sup> *John Donne’s 1622 Gunpowder Plot Sermon: A Parallel-Text Edition*, transcribed and edited by Jeanne Shami (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1996), lines 1284-85.

<sup>117</sup> As Steven W. May has demonstrated, most poets who engaged court politics were not courtiers but court poets or out-of-court poets (*The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts* [Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991]).

Clearly, Donne could not openly criticize Cecil. In fact, danger loomed when one veiled disparagement too thinly: Samuel Daniel, for example, learned caution after his *Philotas* “was censured by the privy council for alluding too dangerously to the late Earl [of Essex], and by analogy hinting at Cecil himself in the character of the treacherous dwarf Craterus.”<sup>118</sup> Pauline Croft asserts that fear of prosecution and censorship forced many writers to circulate libels against Cecil in manuscript instead of print.<sup>119</sup> Such libels became quite popular after Cecil’s death in 1612, when fear of a fate worse than censure abated.<sup>120</sup>

Donne, however, is clear in other poems about his general disgust with flatterers. In “Oh, let not mee not serve so” the speaker hopes not to “serve” as

those Idolatrous flatterers, which still

Their Princes stiles, with many Realmes fulfill

Whence they no tribute have, and where no sway. (lines 5-7)

In “His Parting from Her” Donne’s speaker also nods toward the power held by “Favorites” to make or mar the fortunes of people close to them: “So blinded Justice doth, when Favorites fall, / Strike them, their house, their friends, their followers all” (lines 33-34). Were Donne to become more specific regarding the rise and fall of particular favorites of the queen, he would be forced to bury insinuations in references only obvious to a select coterie—hence the comparisons Donne seems to imply in *Metempsychosis*.

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<sup>118</sup> Pauline Croft, “The Reputation of Robert Cecil: Libels, Political Opinion, and Popular Awareness in the Early Seventeenth Century,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1991): 48.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>120</sup> According to M. Thomas Hester, spying by Cecil and his minions and fear of Topcliffe and his tortures—potential readers of Donne’s lyrics, were he not careful—probably pushed Donne into the position of masking his religious beliefs in rhetoric (“‘This Cannot Be Said’: A Preface to the Reader of Donne’s Lyrics,” *Christianity & Literature* 39 [1990]: 365-85).

Donne's speaker appears to attack Cecil in several episodes of *Metempsychosis*, including the sections devoted to the elephant and the ape. The soul, housed in a mouse, enters the head of "Natures great Masterpece an Elephant" (fol. 13v), gradually eating the elephant's brain until its death. This "iust and thankfull" elephant who "on himself relies" (fol. 13v) resembles the popular Essex, whose fall from favor often was attributed primarily to Cecil.<sup>121</sup> Like Essex, the elephant has faults. Blackley recalls that the elephant's "nature hath giuen him noe knees to bend" (fol. 13v), perhaps an allusion to Essex's pride—often commented upon by contemporaries.<sup>122</sup> While Blackley perceptively questions the reading of Cecil as a mouse because its death along with its prey hardly resembles Cecil's hasty advance after Essex's demise, Smith argues that the mouse's death serves as a threat: Essex's downfall would cause Cecil's fall as well.

What seems to be mockery of Cecil also appears in the "toilefull Ape" (fol. 15r) episode. Like the ape—called "toyfull" in other versions of the poem—the exceedingly ambitious Cecil "reacht at things too high; but open way / there was" (fol. 15v).<sup>123</sup> Comparisons of the deformed Cecil to an ape abound in contemporary lyrics and, according to Blackley and Smith, in contemporary beast fables. Smith argues that as of 1601 most allegorical beast fables were political satires, and he claims that Cecil is satirized as an ape in Spenser's *Mother Hubbard's Tale* and Richard Niccols's *The Beggar's Ape*, which includes both an elephant and a wolf, as does *Metempsychosis*.

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<sup>121</sup> In "Donne's *Ignatius His Conclave* and Other Libels on Robert Cecil," Flynn argues that the elephant recalls Essex and that this episode is one of several Donne libels on Cecil and his politics.

<sup>122</sup> See Blackley's "The Generic Play and Spenserian Parody of John Donne's 'Metempsychosis'" for a thorough analysis of Donne's possible reactions to Essex and his rebellion and to Cecil's potential role in Essex's fall.

<sup>123</sup> Kenneth James Hughes offers another reading of this episode in which Tethlemite represents Cecil, leader of the anti-Essex faction, who becomes the ape—or Essex—killer. Hughes argues that the entire poem is a political satire of British monarchs, beginning with Henry IV as the mandrake root and tracing the soul through Elizabeth I as Themech ("Donne's 'Metempsychosis' and the Objective Idea of Unreason," *Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages Bulletin* 18 [1982]: 15-39).

However, like *Metempsychosis* these satires are “heavily camouflaged in order to protect their authors from the wrath of the powerful persons they attack.”<sup>124</sup> The lusty, depraved ape appears much like Cecil as portrayed in libels, where Cecil’s “sexual appetites” numbered among the themes “most insistently and savagely” satirized.<sup>125</sup>

While these episodes of *Metempsychosis* seem to target Cecil specifically, not all sections satirize Elizabeth’s little ape, but Donne peppers the poem with general disgust for a court where one always fears sabotage and conspiracy.<sup>126</sup> For example, the “whelp” (fol. 14r) of the wolf and watchdog is a double agent who plays Abel’s loyal servant while selfishly preying on sheep, demonstrating the speaker’s image of a court favorite, “a spy (to both Sides false)” (fol. 15r) who appears concerned with others while advancing himself, not the state. In another episode, when the “sea-Pye” takes “the Silly fish, where it disputing lay / And so ends her doubts, and her, beares her away,” the speaker claims,

Exalted she is but to the Exalters good,  
As are by great Ones. Men which lowly stood  
It rais’d to be the Raysers Instrument and food. (fol. 10v)

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<sup>124</sup> Smith, “John Donne’s *Metempsychosis*,” 141. Blackley builds on Smith’s suggestion to provide an extensive comparison of *Metempsychosis* and *Mother Hubbard’s Tale* (“The Generic Play and Spenserian Parody of John Donne’s ‘Metempsychosis’”).

<sup>125</sup> Croft, “The Reputation of Robert Cecil: Libels, Political Opinion, and Popular Awareness in the Early Seventeenth Century,” 54. In a period in which people “had little hesitation in equating physical imperfection with both moral and political decay” (57), his crooked back was often satirized as well, allowing frequent comparisons to Richard III. After his wife’s death in 1597, Cecil did not remarry, but he repeatedly was associated with Catherine Howard, countess of Suffolk (and wife of Cecil’s friend Thomas Howard), and with Lady Walsingham (58). Libels, which regularly presented “sexual depravity as a metaphor for political corruption” (59), often “attributed Salisbury’s death to venereal disease” (58).

<sup>126</sup> Searching for Cecil in every tale is fruitless; as Smith points out, “the incidents of the poem do not outline a linear biography of Cecil but rather present a series of more or less topical anecdotes that illustrate the growing corruptions of the political world of which Cecil is the prime avatar” (“John Donne’s *Metempsychosis*,” 150).

Certainly, all sea creatures appear to be “Instrument and food” to the whale, challenged by no one while voraciously consuming all it needs to survive as king of the ocean. The speaker laments this “hero’s” unparalleled power:

O might not States of more Equality,

consist, and is it of necessitie,

That thousand guiltles Smals to make one Great must die.

Without warning, the whale suddenly is attacked by a “haile-find Thresher and Steelebeak’d Swordfish” who “onlie attempt to doe what all doe wish” (fol. 12v). Smith argues that the whale is Essex, undermined by Anthony and Francis Bacon, although one could argue that the attacking fish are Cecil and Raleigh. Or perhaps the whale is not Essex at all but Elizabeth:

He hunts not Fish, but as an officer,

stayes in his Court, as his owne Nett, and there,

All Sutors of all Sorts themselues inthrall,

So on his back lies this whale wantoning

and in his Gulf-like throat sucks euery thing. (fol. 12r)

If the “wantoning” whale is Elizabeth, toying with her “sutors of all Sorts,” this successful rebellion against the “Tirant” whale could represent Donne’s wishful thinking. In their hasty, ill-planned rebellion, Essex and his followers were like the fish:

not throughly arm’d,

with hope, that they could kill him, nor could doe

good to themselues by his Death. (fol. 12v)

However, unlike the whale who “neuer harm’d” its attackers (fol. 12v), Elizabeth (arguably) gave Essex cause to strike. And, if the whale represents Elizabeth, there is no obvious choice for Essex’s accomplice fish, except perhaps the earl of Southampton. As in many episodes, arguments weaken when the poem is taken too literally. In fact, attempting to match each poetic player with a political counterpart seems unnecessary. Blackley calls attention instead to Donne’s general satire of uneven authority relationships and of the abuse of power by people in high political positions, intimates who hold sway over both the monarch and the masses and advance or destroy careers while hiding safely behind curtains. Regardless of living counterparts, if specific people were intended at all, these characters demonstrate the perils of conspiracy and false flattery.

This fear of a dangerous, conniving counselor is prevalent throughout the Lucian dialogues. *Timon the Misanthrope*, better known for its influence on Shakespeare, addresses the gods’ mercy toward the once wealthy and influential Timon.<sup>127</sup> Undermined by flatterers disguised as friends who left him penniless and shunned from society, Timon digs outside of the city to sustain himself. When Zeus takes pity on Timon and sends Mercury to earth to restore his wealth, Timon rejects the money, for riches have “beene the cause of much mischeife vnto mee, giuing mee up into the hands of flatterers, betraying mee to the hatred, and enuie of others” (fol. 29r). When Timon finally accepts his fortune, former friends including a lawyer and a philosopher reappear, only to be assaulted by Timon. Ingratitude, insincerity, and hypocrisy permeate the story.

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<sup>127</sup> This argument reads, “In this Dialogue Lucian introduceth Timon, who thorough his prodigalitie being become poore, and afterwards forsaken of his freinds complaineth of Ioue as of one y<sup>t</sup> sleepeth and that punisheth not y<sup>c</sup> ungrateful” (fol. 24r).

Hazards of authority and power, especially regarding one's nearest and dearest friends, constitute a focus for the other Lucian tales as well. In the third dialogue of the manuscript (*The Cock*), Micyllus's rooster explains that when his soul inhabited a king he was miserable, even in times of seeming peace and prosperity, because kings constantly face "feares and suspitions, or the treacherey, and conspiracies of their seruants" (fol. 39v).<sup>128</sup> According to the cock, destitution is better than wealth because rich leaders live in fear of "that w<sup>ch</sup> is worst then all the rest," being undermined by trusted friends: "they must stand in feare, to be betraied by those that are most inward" (fol. 39v). Mercury echoes condemnation of a wealthy life in the fourth dialogue, *Charon*, when he discusses a tyrant who refuses to die, not wanting to leave his riches behind to an untrustworthy heir.<sup>129</sup> Micyllus reappears and, convinced of the cock's wisdom, laughs at the vanity of the paranoid tyrant whom Micyllus so admired on earth.

In *The Ship*, three men on a pilgrimage discuss their greatest wishes: Adimantes for unsurpassed riches and adoration, Samippes for elected positions as military leader and monarch, and Timolaus for magic rings that give god-like status on earth.<sup>130</sup> Licinius, a fourth traveler, criticizes his friends' wishes throughout their pilgrimage, expressing no such desires and pointing out the dangers of these lifestyle choices. He especially ridicules Samippes. Such a leader, Licinius says, must worry not just about the

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<sup>128</sup> The introductory argument states, "In this Dialogue Lucian introduceth a certaine Shoemaker, named Micyllus, who dreamed he was become heire vnto a great estate, and whilst he is entertained by this Dreame, his Cocke with crowing awaketh him, wherewith being uerie angrie, he beginneth to speake to the Cocke, and the Cocke answereth him" (fol. 32r).

<sup>129</sup> This argument reads, "In this Dialogue Lucian introdueth [sic.] Charon reasoning with Clotho, one of the three fatall Sisters, about Mercuries delay in conducting the Sowles of such as were dead, to his boat, in the meane while Mercury arriuing, deliuers the occasions of his stay, which was a certaine dead Tyranne whose Soule by no meanes would come along, but sought all the wais it could to escape and returne in the world againe" (fol. 42r).

<sup>130</sup> The argument for the fifth dialogue says, "In this Dialogue Lucian introduceth certaine Persons making Castles in the aire, and first he faineth y<sup>t</sup> they went to the hauen to see a great ship, that was newly arriued, by occasion whereof they enter in to these fant'sies. The interlocut<sup>ers</sup> are. Licinius. Timoläus, Adimātes, Samippes" (fol. 49r).

public dangers of battle but the private dangers of conspiracy. Licinius describes Samippes's imagined reign:

thou stoodest not onlie in doubt of thine enemies, but of a thousand plotts  
and treacheries, from those that were neerest about thee, besides the  
dissimulation, and flatteries of such, as seemed thy freinds, for none were  
truly soe unto thee, but made a shew of it. (fol. 56r)

While this "shew" of false flattery is not discussed specifically in the final dialogue, *Icaromenippus*, Jove does lament the fickle nature of mankind, calling men inconstant and selfish, ready to flatter whichever god suits their purpose.<sup>131</sup>

Ridicule of manipulative and avaricious people does not end with the dialogues but appears again in the playful poem tipped in between folios 43 and 44:

for fees to any form he moulds a cause  
the worst has merits and best has flaws  
fiue guineas make a criminal to day  
And ten to morrow wipe the stain away  
who must like lawyer either starve or plead  
& follow right or wrong where guineas lead.

While at first the poem merely seems to be a lawyer joke, the verse clearly echoes another seventeenth-century poem:

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<sup>131</sup> This argument reads, "In this Dialogue Lucian introduceth a certaine Man called Menippus, who being not satisfied by the Philosophers about matters of the heauens determineth to flie thither himselfe, and so be resolved. First then he faigneth Menippus to be newlie descended from heauen, and talking to himself of the measure, and distance of the way, he had made, a freind of his demaundeth of him what is that he talketh so of, whereupon Menippes discourseth his Voyage unto him" (fol. 58v). After his "freind" says that surely Menippus "becamest an hauke, or a Crowe" to fly to heaven (fol. 59r), Menippus explains that he "tooke mee a great Eagle, and a verie strong Vulture, and cutt of both their wings" essentially to transform into a bird for his quest (fol. 59v).



For fees, to any form he moulds a cause,  
The worst has merits, and the best has flaws.  
Five guineas make a criminal to-day;  
And ten to morrow wipe the stain away. (lines 159-62)

These lines appear in “Canto IV” of “The Dispensary,” a poem by English poet and physician Samuel Garth published in 1699.<sup>132</sup> “The Dispensary” praises benevolence and mocks those who do not support the poor. Even these brief lines revisit mockery of the selfish through (not surprisingly) satire. And, if any profession has been coupled with “favorites” of the wealthy, lawyers have taken the brunt of such criticism.

Disgust with court flatterers is most explicitly demonstrated in folios 67v-68v, the fable called on the title-page “The Tale of the Favourite” but called on folio 67v “The Fable of San ’Foy” (Plates 8-9)—an especially interesting title when one considers the argument that Donne satirizes Spenser in *Metempsychosis*.<sup>133</sup> A segment of the tale’s introductory argument examines the dangers of leaders maintaining “Fauorites”:

In this Tale, or Discourse following, the Author endeuors to delineate the  
impotent loue, that some Princes (though otherwise uertuous men,) beare  
to their undeseruing Fauorites, and sometimes to the hazard of their owne

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<sup>132</sup> *The Works of the English Poets, from Chaucer to Cowper; including the Series Edited, with Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, by Dr. Samuel Johnson: and the Most Approved Translations. The Additional Lives by Alexander Chalmers, F.S.A.*, vol. 9 (London, 1810), 438. The verses in this manuscript might be a satiric poem that Garth later appropriates, an early Garth verse circulating amongst a coterie, or a memorial reconstruction of someone’s favorite portion of Garth’s poem, among other options.

<sup>133</sup> Perhaps this character’s name inspired a reader to add “Mr E. Spencer” to the rear pastedown. Blackley examines the relationship between Donne’s poem and *Mother Hubberds Tale* and *The Faerie Queene*, specifically comparing Spenser’s dedicatory letter to Sir Walter Raleigh with Donne’s prefatory epistle in *Metempsychosis*.

estat's...For, Subiects ouer-hastilie raised by their masters Loue, do often  
abuse that fauour, & either are taken by their fortunes, or do take.

(fol. 67v)

This fable, which depicts “a man of a faire *promising* outside, but who had nothing left within to make it good, but a fine flattery, and courtlie falsehood” appears unique to this collection. (For a full transcription of the argument and the fable, see Appendix 2.) The story ends abruptly with the crafty courtier using his knowledge regarding the king’s mysterious powers to ingratiate himself with the King of Mercia further so that San Foy later can steal the king’s wife and wealth.

While the introductory argument outlines the tale’s promised examination of consequences for a monarch who prizes his favorite subject too much, the tale concludes before the king discovers San Foy’s treachery. In fact, the fable seems incomplete, introducing the malicious courtier but then providing little elaboration regarding the participants’ fates. Several features of this section of the manuscript suggest revision or deleted material. First, there is a discrepancy between this lengthy argument and the brevity of the tale, which constitutes only two pages (fols. 68r-68v). Second, there are two hanging catchwords, an anomaly in the manuscript because catchwords are accurate throughout the other sections containing them. The catchword on folio 67r is “wee,” but “hither” begins the next page (fol. 67v). In addition, the catchword “It” graces the final page (fol. 68v), but the prose ends abruptly on that page, indicating that at some point there might have been additional material.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Catchwords appear on folios 18-68 with the one exception of folio 67v (p. 100/109), which contains no catchword.

Finally, there appear to be leaves missing from the book. Folio 67r is numbered “99,” but folio 67v appears to be labeled “109,” not the expected page “100.” A stray mark on the second “0” in what seems once to have been “100” causes the “0” to look like a “9,” and page “109” is followed by page “110” (fol. 68r). Upon close inspection this stray mark seems to be the curve of the “h” in “hither.” However, the two most likely explanations for this scenario seem improbable: if the scribe paginating the manuscript was also the scribe writing the text, he must have written “100” at the top of this page, written the text on the page, and then misread his own handwriting before paginating “110”; if a separate scribe paginated the manuscript, he labeled page “100” and then failed to provide a page number for folio 68r until the second scribe copied his text onto folio 67v. Another complication is that the scribe’s representations of “h” are not consistently curved throughout the manuscript.<sup>135</sup> One might suggest that this stray mark was made accidentally during the original pagination, causing mis-numbering of the remaining pages. But there appears to be evidence of cancellanda in the form of stubs between folios 67 and 68 (pages “109” and “110”), suggesting purposeful tampering.<sup>136</sup> Because folio 68r has an even page number (“110”) instead of the expected odd number, the scenario becomes more complex than the potential excision of four leaves, doctoring of page numbers, and writing of a condensed version of the tale. If only one of these three circumstances were present, one might assume that a scribe merely made a mistake, but the combination of the unusually brief tale, hanging catchwords, and mis-numbering suggests intentional alteration of the manuscript.

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<sup>135</sup> For example, “h” in “Rhadamanth” on folio 48r, line 4, has a straight line, while the “h” in the same word in line 15 is curved.

<sup>136</sup> There appear to be stubs, which probably remain because folios once present in this section were cut out of the manuscript. Although unlikely, it is also possible that the apparent cancellanda between folios 67 and 68 is actually the stub of folio 69.

These strange material details indicate a possibility that an original, longer fable could have been removed from this manuscript for a reason that we cannot know with certainty but can surmise. If a scribe had transcribed a longer version of the tale which required excision, that scribe could have thought the method least likely to attract attention would be simply to change the second “0” to a “9” (or perhaps to benefit from the coincidence that the loop of the “h” causes the “0” to look like a “9”), label the next leaf “110,” and begin the extremely short version of the fable, hoping that a reader would not notice the discrepancy. Given the previously discussed historical context and the fates to befall future “favorites,” including Raleigh, a reader might easily understand the danger that could surround the owner of a book containing such a scandalous tale, potentially one that did not bury its topical references as deeply as *Metempsychosis* does. The poem’s veil is so thick that modern readers still cannot decipher the exact political references, if any exist, with certainty. As Ernest W. Sullivan, II, argues, “Textual scholars need to ponder why as well as how a text and its versions were created,” for manuscript and print miscellanies are often “monoscripts—each having its specific, private, experiences informed by a single vision.”<sup>137</sup> Through considering the works that the compiler of MS V. a. 241 deliberately brought together in this manuscript book—works linked by genre, motif, and theme—we are given a window into the “single vision” of a seventeenth-century reader who interprets Donne’s complex poem as political satire.

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<sup>137</sup> Ernest W. Sullivan, II, “The Renaissance Manuscript Verse Miscellany: Private Party, Private Text,” in *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts: Papers of the Renaissance English Text Society, 1985-1991*, ed. W. Speed Hill (Binghamton, New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1993), 297, 290.

## Conclusions

This seventeenth-century reader's interpretation of *Metempsychosis* only becomes apparent when we return the poem to its original manuscript context in Folger MS V. a. 241. Clearly, this composite manuscript was designed with great care: its compiler constructed a title-page that draws attention to the chosen contents as a cohesive group. The book seems to have been compiled by a near-contemporary of Donne, a reader interested in satire of the court and its manipulative flatterers. Smith concludes his case for Cecil as the soul by admitting, "Whether any of Donne's contemporaries caught on to the poem's 'conceit' we cannot say for certain."<sup>138</sup> Yet, "evidence" for a contemporary interpretation *does* exist in this collector's choice of texts for this manuscript. Though we cannot assert that all seventeenth-century readers of *Metempsychosis* interpreted this poem similarly, we benefit from attending to the interpretation of someone privy to allusions and political puns unavailable to modern readers. Though this Renaissance reader left no critical essay expounding his poetic interpretation, clues remain in the manuscript's paratexts, contents and their sequence, pagination, and structure. Accumulation of individual studies of manuscript collections—and the potential literary exegeses hidden within them—can illuminate modern "readings" of Renaissance verse. Exploring coded, satiric poems like *Metempsychosis* within original manuscript contexts can prove especially valuable, particularly when multiple studies seem to proffer similar explications. Through analyzing *Metempsychosis* in Folger MS V. a. 241, we provide support for a seventeenth-century reader's political interpretation of the poem, with its thrasher sharks and swordfish vying to control the crown.

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<sup>138</sup> Smith, "John Donne's *Metempsychosis*," 152.

## Chapter 3

### “mine own rags”: “Psalm 137” in British Library

#### Manuscript Add. 25707

From off a hill whose concave womb rewoded

A plaintful story from a sist’ring vale,

My spirits t’ attend this double voice accorded,

And down I laid to list the sad-tuned tale;

So begins Shakespeare’s *A Lover’s Complaint*.<sup>139</sup> Like Edmund Spenser, Samuel Daniel, and other sonneteers, Shakespeare concluded his sonnet sequence with an extended “complaint” by an embittered lover. Or did he? Thomas Thorpe published *A Lover’s Complaint* in the 1609 quarto of Shakespeare’s *Sonnets*, but its authorship has been questioned for years, though not because of competing seventeenth-century attributions. Apparently, Thorpe served as the poem’s only printer, and no extant manuscripts contain copies ascribed to alternative poets. Though no material evidence contests Shakespeare’s authorship of *A Lover’s Complaint*, a poem in the same rhyme royal verse form as *The Rape of Lucrece*, stylistic concerns regarding this arguably pedestrian poem have caused many skeptical critics “to wonder if the poem were worthy of Shakespeare’s genius.”<sup>140</sup> In the 1960s, Kenneth Muir and MacDonald P. Jackson seemed to end debate on the

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<sup>139</sup> William Shakespeare: *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, ed. Colin Burrow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 695. Burrow does not question Shakespeare’s authorship of the poem.

<sup>140</sup> David Bevington, ed., *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Longman, 1997), 1654. Jonathan Crewe calls attention to problems with such assertions: “Because [dubious poems] depend on historically shifting tastes, arguments based on poetic quality alone can never determine whether or not particular poems are by Shakespeare. We also have to admit that Shakespeare could have written bad or uncharacteristic poems” (“The Narrative Poems: Introduction,” in *William Shakespeare The Complete Works*, gen. eds. Stephen Orgel and A. R. Braunmuller [New York: Penguin Group, 2002], 3).

matter. Yet, in early 2007 Brian Vickers challenged Shakespeare's authorship yet again, calling *A Lover's Complaint* an "extremely mediocre poem which differs in every respect from Shakespeare's normal clarity and economy of composition."<sup>141</sup> Through analysis of various stylistic markers, Vickers's monograph aims to re-assign the poem to John Davies of Hereford and "to see this spurious poem removed from the canon where it has been allowed to nest for four centuries."<sup>142</sup>

Many poems of dubious origin have been excluded from Renaissance authorial canons because scholars considered them "extremely mediocre" verse—unworthy of the author in question. Some judgments, like that of Vickers, seem well founded and at least plausible. But others prove faulty, particularly those based solely on stylistic evidence, with general characteristics of an author's style frequently drawn from a canon determined by poems found in unreliable seventeenth-century posthumous printed collections.

Unlike *A Lover's Complaint*, most seventeenth-century printed poems also appear in multiple versions in manuscripts, and scribes occasionally assign multiple authors. Manuscript evidence repeatedly demonstrates how little power poets maintained over their verse once it entered the world. Donne, as mentioned, shared his poems with his

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<sup>141</sup> Brian Vickers, *Shakespeare, A Lover's Complaint, and John Davies of Hereford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1-2. Vickers's detailed case for Davies's authorship sparked a heated debate in *Times Literary Supplement*. Harold Love offered a generally positive review of Vickers's book (July 6, 2007, 3-4), to which Vickers responded (July 13, 6). This letter prompted in turn a critical letter by Katherine Duncan-Jones (July 20, 6), who had included the poem in her edition of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Arden Shakespeare series, gen. eds. Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan [Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1997]), leading to further debate among scholars for weeks. Other works by Vickers regarding attribution and authorship include "*Counterfeiting*" *Shakespeare: Evidence, Authorship, and John Ford's Funerall Elegy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) and *Shakespeare, Co-Author: A Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Also see Harold Love, *Attributing Authorship: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For an overview of the debate over *A Lover's Complaint* prior to Vickers's publication and of the poem's textual history, see Burrow's "Introduction," in *William Shakespeare: The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, especially 138-46.

<sup>142</sup> Vickers, *Shakespeare, A Lover's Complaint, and John Davies of Hereford*, 6.

coterie, who circulated verse in order to impress and entertain each other and to catch the notice of potential patrons.<sup>143</sup> Their writing talents displayed their mental and rhetorical capabilities and their ease and grace in composition to court counselors who held professional futures in their hands. This is not to say that poets composed merely for political advancement, but coterie poets frequently wrote verse for specific rhetorical situations and for specific recipients. Much of their verse was occasional; such poems often accompanied letters to friends or patrons whom the writer expected to understand the vaguely veiled jokes and political punch lines. Once poems left the writer's hands, they did not circulate as fixed objects. Verse was copied and recopied, sometimes only from memory, supplying numerous manuscript versions of a Renaissance poem—often no two versions identical.<sup>144</sup> Though authors regularly composed verse unintended for publication or even public circulation, many poets (including Donne) failed to contain their creations, which eventually reached readers outside of the anticipated audiences.

This unwarranted verse distribution occurred in part because authors did not “own” their poetic inventions. In fact, they did not even expect their poems to remain static works. According to Ted-Larry Pebworth, “the very idea of stabilizing a text was essentially of little concern to coterie poets in the later sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries.”<sup>145</sup> Though modern editors endeavor to re-create poetic texts that are as close

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<sup>143</sup> Ted-Larry Pebworth lists men that he believes were members of Donne's coterie at various points: Francis Bacon, Richard Baker, John Davies, Francis Davison, George Garrard, Henry Goodyer, William Herbert, John Hoskins, Robert Ker, Thomas Overbury, Walter Raleigh, John and Thomas Roe, Benjamin Rudyerd, Rowland Woodward, and Henry Wotton (“John Donne, Coterie Poetry, and the Text as Performance,” *Studies in English Literature* 29 [1989]: 61-75).

<sup>144</sup> Versions of “The Good Morrowe,” for example, are extant in at least forty different manuscripts; only two of these copies are identical. See Lara M. Crowley, “Establishing a ‘fitter’ Text of Donne's ‘The Good Morrowe,’” *John Donne Journal* 22 (2003): 5-21.

<sup>145</sup> Pebworth claims that poems that Donne never endeavored to publish maintain a performative quality, for he did not push them to become finished products: “Donne was forced, by the very nature of print publication, to stabilize the texts of the seven poems printed with his cooperation during his lifetime...With



as possible to what authors actually wrote, many lyrics exist in various legitimate versions with no “final” copy ever produced.

At best, manuscript transmission was liable to almost limitless variation. Because coterie poems were rarely considered finished products, other poets felt free to change, “improve,” or “correct” circulating verse for new recipients or new occasions.<sup>146</sup> Even multiple manuscript copies of the same work personally prepared by the author can (and nearly always do) differ in details. Once a work left the physical possession of its author, it was open to virtually infinite nonauthorial variation at the hands of selective, inattentive, or officious scribes. A seventeenth-century copyist may, for example, omit or change an ascription, omit or rearrange individual pieces within a composite work, or augment one author’s work with pieces drawn from another—all of these actions affecting canon.<sup>147</sup> It is no surprise that numerous unattributed or misattributed Renaissance poems remain.

Assigning authorship is complicated further by Renaissance poets evidently supplying each other with verse. Donne, for example, apparently provided Sir Henry Goodyer with the original verse epistle “A nostre Countesse chez vous” with the expectation that Goodyer might adopt part or all of the letter as his own composition,

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the other 187 poems, those circulated only in manuscript, no such stabilization of texts by their author was ever demanded. Indeed, they were by and large poems written for circulation to individual recipients and/or to a coterie” (“John Donne, Coterie Poetry, and the Text as Performance,” 61). Pebworth suggests, “We, who jealously guard and celebrate individual achievement, must reorient our thinking about authorship in the Renaissance, a transitional period when manuscript culture had not been entirely displaced by print culture. Questions of canon were probably of significantly less interest to Donne and his contemporaries than they are to us” (69).

<sup>146</sup> Ernest W. Sullivan, II, argues, with Pebworth, that there are “alternative, authoritative versions of some poems” in manuscript and print miscellanies—poems created “in a specific set of circumstances for a specific set of readers or even a single reader” (“The Renaissance Manuscript Verse Miscellany: Private Party, Private Text,” in *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts: Papers of the Renaissance English Text Society, 1985-1991*, ed. W. Speed Hill [Binghamton, New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1993], 296).

<sup>147</sup> Pebworth, “John Donne, Coterie Poetry, and the Text as Performance,” 70.

probably to impress a potential patroness. In a letter requesting that Goodyer return the verse for possible publication, Donne appears chiefly concerned that his poem not fall among his verse addressed to high-ranking patronesses if Goodyer previously presented the verse to a “less worthy” recipient. If Goodyer only “applied any pieces of it,” Donne seems to find it unlikely that anyone will notice the discrepancy when he prints the whole poem.<sup>148</sup> Such exchanges illuminate scenarios involving verse sharing and collaboration, reminding modern editors of potential limitations in establishing a single author for many Renaissance poems.

Donne’s failure to maintain a copy of “A nostre Countesse chez vous” reveals the intense complications involved in developing Donne’s canon due, in part, to his apparent lack of interest in his verse. Letters provide glimpses into Donne’s attitude toward his own poetry, which he portrays as childish, even silly.<sup>149</sup> In 1607, Donne remarks to Goodyer that he sends

another ragge of verses, worthy of that name for the smallnesse, and age,  
for it hath long lien among my other papers, and laughs at them that have  
adventured to you: for I think till now you saw it not, and neither you, nor  
it should repent it.<sup>150</sup>

Donne further derides his craft in a later letter to Goodyer: “The Spanish proverb informes me, that he is a fool which cannot make one Sonnet, and he is mad which makes

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<sup>148</sup> Donne, *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour (1651)*, intro. M. Thomas Hester (Delmar, New York: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1977), 197-98.

<sup>149</sup> Pebworth remarks, “while the writing of poetry might be necessary for initial advancement, it was regarded as something one grew out of, an activity inappropriate for sober, mature men” (“John Donne, Coterie Poetry, and the Text as Performance,” 63). According to Pebworth, Donne is unique among Renaissance poets in failing to label verse as transcendent.

<sup>150</sup> Donne, *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour (1651)*, 88.

two.”<sup>151</sup> Some remarks certainly are posturing, even *sprezzatura*, but Goodyer was perhaps Donne’s most intimate friend, one to whom Donne was often quite candid. The abundance of Donne’s extant poems conflict with his bravado, portraying instead a man compelled to versify far into his career.<sup>152</sup> Apparently, Dean Donne was made nervous about much of his early poetry, attempting to suppress, even destroy compositions of his youth still in circulation. He deeply regretted publishing the *Anniversaries*, and he was distressed that the Lord Chamberlain pushed him to print a verse collection “as a valediction to the world” before taking orders.<sup>153</sup> As demonstrated by his request in a 1614 letter to Goodyer “to borrow that old book of you,” presumably Goodyer’s collection of Donne’s poems, Donne’s decision not to publish his poems probably reflects (among other concerns) his inattention to maintaining verse holographs.<sup>154</sup>

Though Donne apparently cared little for conserving his own verse, English Renaissance readers collected his poems more than those of any other poet. Yet, manuscripts suggest that some verse collectors lacked concern about precise canons. They attributed authorship when they knew (or thought they knew) verse composers, but they left many poems unascribed, showing primary interest in the verse itself. Other collectors, however, were quite concerned with correctly assigning authors to their

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 103-4.

<sup>152</sup> In a letter of 1625-1627, Donne laments his inability to stop writing but says that he will attempt to provide useful poems, verse about divinity instead of pleasure: “since I have not yet utterly delivered my self from this intemperance of scribbling (though I thank God my accesses are lesse and lesse vehement) I make account that to spend all my little stock of knowledge upon matter of delight, were the same error, as to spend a fortune upon Masks and Banqueting houses: I chose rather to build in this poor fashion, some Spittles, and Hospitals, where the poor and impotent sinner may finde some relief, or at least understanding of his infirmity” (*Letters to Severall Persons of Honour* [1651], 228).

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>154</sup> In the letter requesting “A nostre Countesse chez vous,” Donne also tells Goodyer, “I am brought to a necessity of printing my Poems, and addressing them to my L. Chamberlain. This I mean to do forthwith; not for much publique view, but at mine own cost, a few Copies....By this occasion I am made a Rhapsoder of mine own rags, and that cost me more diligence, to seek them, then it did to make them” (*Letters to Severall Persons of Honour* [1651], 196-97).

poems.<sup>155</sup> Through thorough inspection of poems' manuscript contexts, modern readers can discern levels of conscientiousness among collectors and scribes and take advantage of the diligence of some Renaissance readers in order to enhance our knowledge of authorial canons.

### ***The Skipwith Manuscript and "Psalm 137"***

Study of ascriptions in British Library MS Add. 25707 calls the established canon of Donne's verse into question. The collection, also known as the Skipwith manuscript (because of its apparent ownership by the Skipwith family of Cotes, Leicestershire), contains approximately sixty poems and one prose problem by Donne. It also contains verse and prose, especially in the form of letters, by many other prominent Renaissance writers, such as Goodyer (related to the Skipwith family by marriage), Sir Henry Wotton, Henry King, Francis Beaumont and his brother Sir John Beaumont, and Henry and William Skipwith.<sup>156</sup> Many Renaissance verse editors have consulted the Skipwith

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<sup>155</sup> Ascriptions can prove important to study of literary texts in multiple ways, such as copy-text determination. For example, editors rarely select versions ascribed to "wrong" authors as copy-texts, instead presuming, with or without reason, that such texts are unreliable. Because assumptions and assertions about transmission and "corruption" stem from copy-text choices, detailed investigation of Renaissance manuscript verses and their attributions allows for well-informed editorial decisions regarding modern texts. Correctly identifying authors also remains critical for the practical (though perhaps disheartening) reason that anonymous poems stand little chance of being printed. Yet, such attributions—in manuscript and in print—must be considered with caution. Even while contributing to studies of contemporary reputations of specific poems and authors, as well as the development of individual canons, questionable ascriptions can detract from efforts to ascertain Renaissance verse composers. Steven W. May asserts, "many scribes gave spurious attributions to the poems they copied, while they often revised the texts at will" (*The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts* [Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991], 3).

<sup>156</sup> The Skipwith manuscript is labeled B13 by editors of *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* (gen. ed. Gary A. Stringer, 4 vols. to date [Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995-]). The folio manuscript of 186 leaves contains works written in at least six different scripts on seventeenth-century paper. For more on this manuscript, see Hobbs, *Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts*, particularly 62-67. Peter Beal, who also describes the Skipwith manuscript in the *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* (London: Mansell; New York: Bowker, 1980), agrees with Grierson that the texts of the Skipwith manuscript could be related to those of the Edward Smyth manuscript. He also points out that John Cave probably was related to the Skipwith family. Helen Gardner notes

manuscript. Donne editor John Hayward, for example, incorporated many Skipwith readings, identifying the manuscript as one of the “important texts.”<sup>157</sup> Interest in the manuscript partially stems from Helen Gardner’s potential identification of a notable scribe: “The original writers left blanks and spaces which have been filled with a collection of poems, many by Henry King, in a hand that is possibly Philip King’s.”<sup>158</sup>

Grierson questioned the canonical legitimacy of several poems attributed to Donne in the Skipwith manuscript. He challenged four poems that Chambers called Donne compositions based on their inclusion in this collection; ultimately Grierson acknowledged only “A Letter written by S<sup>r</sup> H: G: and J: D: alternis vicibus” as a legitimate Donne poem because “There is a *characteristic touch* in each one” of the stanzas allegedly contributed by Donne.<sup>159</sup> Of the others—“O Fruitful garden,” “Fie, fie, you sons of Pallas,” and “Why chose she black”—Grierson said, “I cannot find *anything*

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similarities with the Westmoreland, John Cave, and Haslewood-Kingsborough II manuscripts (ed., *The Elegies and the Songs and Sonnets* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965]). Though admitting that ownership by the Skipwith family is more likely, Margaret Crum offers the possibility of ownership by another family: “There were Williams in the Royalist family of Skipworth of Cotes” (“Introduction,” in *The Poems of Henry King* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965], 58). According to Crum, the manuscript probably was “first intended as a Donne collection, starting with thirty-four of his poems copied by two hands”; a third hand then added miscellaneous verse, including many poems not by Donne. In addition, William Skipwith may have inscribed a number of poems in the manuscripts, including his own (58). Crum suggests that several scribes of the composite volume were Skipwith family members of different generations who composed over an extended period. Arthur F. Marotti discusses various members of the Skipwith family who might have been involved with the collection, suggesting that many of the poets represented in the volume were “highly valued in Royalist circles” (*Manuscript, Print, and the Renaissance Lyric* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995], 197).

<sup>157</sup> John Hayward, ed., *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne* (London: Nonesuch Press; New York: Random House, 1945), xxiii. Traditionally, editors of Donne’s poetry have associated the Skipwith manuscript with Group III manuscripts, but Gardner argues that the manuscript cannot be categorized easily.

<sup>158</sup> Gardner, ed., *The Elegies and the Songs and Sonnets*, lxxviii. Though Gardner suggests that further discussion of this possibility can be found in Crum’s “Notes on the Physical Characteristics of some Manuscripts of the Poems of Donne and of Henry King” (*The Library* XVI [June 1961]: 121-32), I can find no such suggestion. Crum does argue that someone intimate with the King family must have owned the manuscript because of the anagrams on Bishop John King’s third daughter Dorothy at the beginning of the manuscript and because in one “section are good texts of seven of Henry King’s poems, including ‘On the King’s Happy Return, 1633’” (*The Poems of Henry King*, 58).

<sup>159</sup> Herbert J. C. Grierson, ed., *The Poems of John Donne*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), 267. Emphasis added.

*eminently characteristic* in any of the rest of the group,” leading him to conclude, “Certainly there is nothing in the other three poems...which would warrant our ascribing them to Donne.”<sup>160</sup> Though Grierson did not offer alternative authors for these poems, he proposed authors for others he judged misattributed. Francis Beaumont, he suggested, composed several “Donne” poems, and “Stay, O sweet, and do not rise” is “Probably by John Dowlands.”<sup>161</sup> One might argue that Grierson, whose contributions to Donne studies cannot be over-emphasized, was well qualified to offer poetic attributions; yet, he provided little or no material evidence to corroborate some assertions, principally basing authorship on evidence of style.<sup>162</sup>

Grierson also discussed “Psalm 137,” the only poem present in all seven seventeenth-century printed editions of Donne’s verse that is now excluded from his canon. “Psalm 137” (fols. 16v-17v, transcription in Appendix 3) appears near the middle of the group of thirty poems attributed to “I.D.” in a section of the Skipwith manuscript that, according to Crum, was created prior to 1633<sup>163</sup>—barring the possibility that the ascription stems from the scriptural translation’s presence in the 1633 printed collection. Grierson, however, argued that “Psalm 137” is “Probably by Francis Davison,” supposedly grounding his assertion in manuscript evidence, metrical form, and

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, cliii. Emphasis added.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, cliii; vol. 1, 432.

<sup>162</sup> Some other discussions of Donne’s canon rely heavily, if not solely, on stylistic support. Take, for example, James S. Baumlin’s claim for Donne’s authorship of “The Token” (“Donne’s ‘The Token’: A Lesson in the Fashion(ing) of Canon,” *College English* 59, no. 3 [March 1997]: 257-76). Baumlin aptly remarks, “the best evidence for authorship...lies not in the poetry’s print history but in its prior transmission in manuscript” (273, footnote 1). However, he bases his argument primarily in “a deconstructive method” (258), arguing that the final 14 lines of the poem—written in reaction to the Petrarchan opening, which he attributes to another poet—are “thoroughly Donnean in thought and style” (261). For Baumlin, the poem proves to be “Donne’s *rhetorically* as well as poetically” (261).

<sup>163</sup> See Crum, “Notes on the Physical Characteristics of some Manuscripts of the Poems of Donne and of Henry King,” 127; Crum, *The Poems of Henry King*, 58. The Skipwith manuscript’s text of “Psalm 137” is similar to the text in the 1633 *Poems*, not in accidentals but certainly in verbal choices (with only minor differences).

style.<sup>164</sup> Yet, Grierson's manuscript proof in favor of Davison is slight; he listed six manuscripts containing the poem, calling attention to the Davison attribution while failing to clarify that two of the manuscripts—British Library MS Add. 25707 and Cambridge MS Add. 29—assign the poem to Donne.<sup>165</sup> Additionally, though the poem is credited to Davison in three manuscripts, all three ascriptions appear in the hand of *one* scribe.<sup>166</sup> Outside of this single scribe, we have no evidence that any seventeenth-century readers challenged Donne's authorship of "Psalm 137."

This chapter reconsiders the authorship of "Psalm 137," re-assessing manuscript proof that purportedly points to Davison as well as material evidence linking the poem to Donne.<sup>167</sup> Here we also identify connections between this poem and "The Lamentations of Jeremy, for the Most Part According to Tremelius," the one scriptural verse translation universally accepted as a Donne poem. Considering "Psalm 137" as a part of Donne's canon can alter both our understanding of Donne as a verse translator and (aided by future critical investigations) our interpretations of his other divine poems, particularly "Lamentations." Finally, we revisit metrical form and authorial style, which formerly served as the basis for attribution. Though I argue that these important elements actually

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<sup>164</sup> Grierson, ed., *The Poems of John Donne*, vol. 1, 424.

<sup>165</sup> The sixth manuscript, British Library MS Add. 27407, lacks an ascription. In *Psalm Culture and Early Modern Literature* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), Hannibal Hamlin mentions that the poem also is attributed to Donne in Holland's *Psalmists of Britain* (132).

<sup>166</sup> Ralph Crane is the scribe. Philipp Von Rohr-Sauer first noted that Crane seems to be the only authority for claiming Davison's authorship of the poem in "English Metrical Psalms from 1600 to 1660: A Study in the Religious and Aesthetic Tendencies of that Period" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1938), 95. I am indebted to Robert Kilgore for making me aware of this study. After Rohr-Sauer briefly challenges Grierson's assertion that Davison composed the poem, he does not discuss this claim, which is peripheral to his argument. He does, however, remind us that the poem has "been accepted as Donne's by Sam Johnson, John Julian, Henry Cotton, Alexander Grosart, and John Holland, who calls it 'the rugged but sinewy version by Dr. Donne'" (95).

<sup>167</sup> Many editors have cast doubt on the notion of a "definitive text," and collaboration and poetic appropriation especially complicate authorship claims regarding Renaissance texts. Yet, recognition of these valuable challenges to exclusive authorship need not hinder the pursuit of establishing primary authors of texts when evidence permits.

substantiate Donne's authorship, not Davison's, they will be considered as secondary resources in the process of reevaluating "Psalm 137" based primarily on extant material evidence.

Ralph Crane ascribed the poem to Davison in MS Rawlinson Poet. 61<sup>168</sup> and MSS Harley 3357<sup>169</sup> and 6930<sup>170</sup>—manuscripts containing collections of verse psalms composed by Davison and contemporary poets. Grierson claimed, "That Davison is the

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<sup>168</sup> According to F. P. Wilson, Crane was forced in 1625 (after the great London plague) to begin "making 'private transcripts' of poems and plays for presentation to his patrons, several of which survive to attest the industry of his pen and the beauty of his calligraphy" (*Ralph Crane, Scrivener to the King's Players* [London: reprinted by the Oxford University Press, 1926], 198). MS Rawl. Poet. 61 is "one of the largest of these transcripts" (199). A leather-bound manuscript, it contains the following works: a meditation upon Job xvii by William Austin of Lincoln's Inn; selected psalms by Francis and Christopher Davison and others about whom Wilson says "most if not all of them [were] members of the Inns of Court"; hymns by William Austin, dedicated to Crane's friend "Iohn Peirs" and dated 23 Oct. 1626; an original work by Crane entitled "A Sumarie; and true Distinction, betweene the Lawe, & y<sup>e</sup> Ghospel"; and a long poem by "Ph. M" [Massinger?] on the plague of 1625. "137. Psalme (aliter)" appears on folios 62r-64r (paginated 95-99) attributed to "Fr. Da." (fol. 64r).

<sup>169</sup> This small manuscript, which belonged to "Hennarietta Holles" in 1708, contains an introductory epistle to Sir Francis Ashley, brother of Sir Anthony Ashley, to whom Crane clerked for seven years beginning as early as 1588. In the dedicatory epistle dated "Decemb. 1632," Crane recognizes that Ashley is a lawyer but says, "Though yo<sup>r</sup> Profession be the Law-Temporall your Contemplation is the Law-Theologicall: and to such yo<sup>r</sup> Consecrated howres, comes this well-meant Dedication" (fol. 2r). On the title-page (fol. 3r) Crane calls the book "A Handfull of Celestiall Flowers" and lists the manuscript's contents, which mirror those of MS Rawl. Poet. 61 with the omission of works by Crane and "Ph. M" and the inclusion of "A diuine Pastorall Eglogue." Beneath the contents Crane indicates that the manuscript is "Composed by diuers worthie & Learned Gentlemen: Manuscrib'd by R. Cr.:" A stub after the title-page could belong to the dedication leaf, which might have been added later, or more likely to the first folio indicating Holles's ownership of the book, given to her by her father. The psalm translations appear first in the manuscript (through fol. 66r). Several poems introduce the psalms in each of Crane's manuscript collections, beginning with Davison's "Come Vrania, heauenly Muse." Crane labels his version of "Psalm 137" as "Psal. 137. (" on folio 59v, which suggests that he intended to write something in parentheses but did not complete the title (see the following note). His stanza numbers are unusual and appear problematic, suggesting that he either hurriedly copied the poem from an original version or copied it from a poor version. The poem contains catchwords and is attributed to "Fr. Da." (fol. 61v).

<sup>170</sup> This manuscript contains only the psalms (the same versions in the same sequence as the other Crane manuscripts) without other contents, a dedicatory epistle, or even a title-page. The manuscript book is paginated, apparently by Crane. It is entitled "An Introduction to the Translation of the Psalmes" (fol. 2r); after a small flourish, it begins with "Come Vrania, heavenly Muse." Like his other manuscript versions, these poems are provided catchwords. Unlike his previous practices, Crane rarely attributes the psalm translations in this manuscript. However, some authors are indicated in another script—possibly in pencil—which suggests that a later owner of this manuscript had access to one of the other two Crane manuscripts. The ascription "Fr: D:" (fol. 52v) appears to be written in pencil by another hand, as becomes clear when compared with Crane's "F. D." on folio 8v. After a verse translation of Psalm 137 attributed to "Io: B.," "Psalm .137. (aliter)" appears (fols. 51r-52v, pages 101-4); presumably "(aliter)" offers acknowledgment in Latin that this poem represents "another" verse translation of Psalm 137. Crane probably intended to write "aliter" after "(" in the poem's title in MS Harley 3357 as well but became careless or hurried.



author of this particular Psalm is strongly suggested by the poetical *Induction* which in style and verse resembles the psalm.”<sup>171</sup> The first stanza of the “Induction” reads,

Come Urania, heavenly Muse,  
and infuse  
Sacred flame to my invention;  
Sing so loud that Angells may  
heare thy lay,  
Lending to thy note attention. (lines 1-6)

As Grierson suggested, the “Induction” mirrors the metrical form of “Psalm 137,” as demonstrated in its opening stanza:

By Euphrates flowry side  
we did bide  
From dear Iuda far absented  
Tearinge y<sup>e</sup> ayre w<sup>th</sup> our cryes  
& our eyes  
w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>eir</sup> streames his stream augmented. (lines 1-6)

Grierson implied that Davison’s employment of this verse form is unique, but the Sidney psalter—object of Donne’s verse encomium “Upon the translation of the Psalmes by Sir Philip Sydney, and the Countesse of Pembroke his Sister”—contains an identical verse form in “Psalm XXXVIII”:

Lord while that thy rage doth bide,  
Do not chide  
Nor in anger chastise me;

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<sup>171</sup> Grierson, ed., *The Poems of John Donne*, vol. 2, 267.

For thy shafts have pierc't me sore,

And yet more,

Still Thy hands upon me be. (lines 1-6)<sup>172</sup>

Readers of the Sidney psalms, such as Donne, would have been familiar with the metrical form. In fact, each Crane psalm collection includes four scriptural translations and one induction in this verse form written by a contemporary poet (presumably Joseph Bryan) while Davison provides only one other similar poem.<sup>173</sup> In addition, Crane prepared the manuscript collections without Davison's input; in each manuscript, the psalm translation is found among "Certaine selected Psalmes of Daud. (in verse) different from Those usually sung in the Church. Composed by Francis Dauison, esq<sup>r</sup>. *deceased*: and other Gentlemen."<sup>174</sup> Without Davison's participation, Crane prepared three manuscripts that are nearly identical—essentially one manuscript and two copies.

Grierson's judgment of this poem was primarily subjective. Though Grierson generally focused on style and verse form of "Psalm 137" rather than material evidence, all modern editors have joined him in excluding the poem from Donne's canon.<sup>175</sup> Certainly, Grierson was well versed in Donne's stylistic tendencies, and in this case some manuscript evidence supports his assertion. However, the notion that correct attribution of a single poem slipped by all seventeenth-century editors of Donne's collected verse

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<sup>172</sup> *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. William A. Ringler, Jr. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 327. Rohr-Sauer called attention to the presence of the identical verse form in the Sidney psalter ("English Metrical Psalms from 1600 to 1660: A Study in the Religious and Aesthetic Tendencies of that Period," 94-95).

<sup>173</sup> The following psalms are attributed to Davison: 1 ("vnfinished"), 13, 23 (three versions), 39, 73, 79, 86, 123, 128, 130, 131, 133, and 137. Of these fifteen scriptural translations attributed to Davison, the only psalm composed in the same verse form as 137 is 23 (first version). However, composed in that form by "Jos. Be." are psalms 65, 114, 124, and 146. "Jos. Be" also wrote a version of Psalm 137, the only other version of the psalm in the collection.

<sup>174</sup> MS Rawlinson Poet. 61, folio 1r. Emphasis added.

<sup>175</sup> I have found no substantial discussion of the poem by Redpath, Clements, Hayward, Milgate, Shawcross, Smith, Patrides, Carey, or Dickson.

requires more than subjective proof, especially when considering their general accuracy: as mentioned in Chapter One, “Psalm 137” is one of only two poems in the 1633 *Poems* currently believed to be attributed to Donne by mistake, the other being Basse’s epitaph to Shakespeare, which editors of the 1635 *Poems* caught and excluded.<sup>176</sup> In addition to the printed editions and the six manuscripts recorded by Grierson, “Psalm 137” also appears in four seventeenth-century manuscripts never before discussed in conjunction with the poem: MS Eng. misc. e. 13, MS Rawlinson Poet. 117, MS Tanner 466, and British Library MS Add. 29427, a manuscript containing the first two poetic stanzas set to music.<sup>177</sup> The poem is unasccribed in MS Add. 29427; the other three manuscripts assign the poem to Donne, not Davison. Recognition that “Psalm 137” is attributed to Donne not only in the seventeenth-century printed collections but also in five distinct extant manuscripts (as opposed to three manuscripts prepared by one scribe) impels us to reassess the authorship of this long-neglected verse translation.

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<sup>176</sup> Gardner briefly mentions “Psalm 137” in her discussion of the 1633 *Poems*, calling it “not by Donne” and later saying that this poem and Basse’s epitaph on Shakespeare “are the only poems certainly not by Donne” (*The Elegies and the Songs and Sonnets*, lxxxiii). However, she does not provide an explanation for this statement. Evelyn Simpson mentions, “It should be noted that the only two poems in 1633 which are not accepted by modern editors as Donne’s are Basse’s *Epitaph on Shakespeare*, which was immediately recognized as spurious, and was not reprinted in 1635 or any later edition, and a metrical version of Psalm 137, which is ascribed to Donne in one MS., and to Francis Davison in three MSS” (“Jonson and Donne. A Problem of Authorship,” *The Review of English Studies* 15, no. 59 [July 1939]: 276, footnote 3). Simpson neglects to specify manuscripts but probably refers to the Crane collections and to British Library MS Add. 25707.

<sup>177</sup> I gathered this information from *First-Line Index of Manuscript Poetry 1500-1800 in Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library Oxford*, ed. Margaret Crum, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969) and *Catalogue of Manuscript Music in the British Museum*, ed. Augustus Hughes-Hughes, 3 vols. (London: British Museum, 1906-1909). The poem appears to be absent from manuscripts contained in the Beinecke, Folger, Houghton, Huntington, and Rosenbach libraries. I am grateful to staff members of these libraries for their assistance, particularly Heather Wolfe of the Folger Library, who encouraged me to consult manuscripts containing Renaissance verse set to music; as H. R. Woudhuysen notes, “literary editors have not always paid sufficient attention to manuscripts which contain musical settings of poems with words to them” (*Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640* [Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996], 159).

### *Francis Davison and Psalm Versification*

Nearly all Renaissance authors alluded to Psalms in some form, and apparently most poets experimented with psalm versification—hence Hannibal Hamlin’s declaration that “the translation, or ‘Englishing,’ of the biblical Psalms substantially shaped the culture of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England.”<sup>178</sup> As a result, there are many extant collections of English metrical psalms from the period in manuscripts and in print. Arguably the most popular psalm to translate was Psalm 137, unique in being datable in Israel’s history to the exile of Jews in Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar ransacked Jerusalem in 587 B.C.<sup>179</sup> The countess of Pembroke, Francis Bacon, and Henry King are among its translators. Hamlin persuasively argues that even Shakespeare tried his hand at Psalm 137 through Mowbray’s extended lament in *Richard II*.<sup>180</sup>

Francis Davison (1573/4-1619?) also translated Psalm 137, among others.<sup>181</sup> Son of William Davison (Sir Francis Walsingham’s secretary and scapegoat for Mary Queen of Scots’s execution), Francis Davison was a protégé of the second earl of Essex, living and traveling under Essex’s patronage in the 1590s. While abroad in 1596, Davison

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<sup>178</sup> Hamlin, *Psalm Culture and Early Modern Literature*, 1. Also see Rivkah Zim’s influential study, *English Metrical Psalms: Poetry as Praise and Prayer* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987). According to Zim, George Joye printed the first English psalter in 1530, and more than seventy additional English versions of the Psalms were printed during the sixteenth century, while many versions survive solely in manuscripts (1-2). Hamlin remarks that the most prominent printed collection was Sternhold and Hopkins’s *The Whole Booke of Psalmes*, the “most widely known metrical version of the Psalms in England, being published in over 700 editions between 1562 and 1696” (*Psalm Culture and Early Modern Literature*, 233, footnote 36).

<sup>179</sup> For more on Renaissance translations of Psalm 137, see Hamlin’s final chapter in *Psalm Culture and Early Modern Literature*.

<sup>180</sup> Hamlin argues that in *King Richard II*, 1.3.159-73 (*The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd edition), Shakespeare alludes to the psalm in subject, language, and images (*Psalm Culture and Early Modern Literature*, 242-44). The “unstrung viol or a harp” and the “enjailed...tongue” certainly recall the psalm, as does the passage’s focus on exile. According to Hamlin, other Psalm 137 translators include Thomas Carew, Sir John Oldham, John Saltmarsh, George Wither, Richard Crashaw, George Sandys, John Norris, Thomas Campion, Phineas Fletcher (Giles’s brother), Edmund Elys, Sir John Denham, William Whittingham, and others, eventually even Milton. Apparently, Carew’s version of 137 was his only psalm to be printed before the nineteenth century, appearing as the first of Henry Lawes’s *Select Psalmes of a New Translation*, 1655.

<sup>181</sup> Davison’s date of death is unknown but falls between 1613 and 1619.

discovered that his father had been passed over in favor of Robert Cecil to replace Walsingham as Secretary of State, and shortly thereafter Davison's funding diminished, thanks in part to Essex's mounting frustration with Davison's extravagance and poor assistance in foreign intelligence.<sup>182</sup> Davison was forced to return to England in 1597, and after working briefly as a secretary he turned to poetry in an effort to support himself. In 1602, Davison contributed to and edited *A Poetical Rhapsody*, a printed collection of Renaissance verse.<sup>183</sup>

*A Poetical Rhapsody* became one of the most prominent printed verse miscellanies of the Renaissance. In fact, "Until recently, it has been seen as one of the most influential and valuable Elizabethan miscellanies, the last of its kind."<sup>184</sup> Davison collected verse by Sidney, Spenser, Raleigh, and the mysterious "A. W." (who contributed approximately 100 pages of poetry), among other poets—a total of seventeen versifiers. Even Donne has been charged by various Davison editors with authorship of several

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<sup>182</sup> Richard C. McCoy discusses Davison in "Lord of Liberty: Francis Davison and the Cult of Elizabeth," in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 212-28. Francis Davison's frustrations did not grow solely from his father's fall in 1587; in fact, McCoy suggests that the aftermath of this calamity was far less pronounced than has been thought.

<sup>183</sup> Francis Davison worked as secretary to Sir Thomas Parry but was dismissed in June 1602 after Parry was appointed ambassador to France. After losing employment and patronage, Davison took up another career; John Chamberlain reports, "It seemes younge Davison meanes to take another course, and turne poet, for he hath lately set out certain sonnets and epigrams" (McCoy, "Lord of Liberty: Francis Davison and the Cult of Elizabeth," 223; quoting from *Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Sarah Williams [London, 1861], 146). His poems in *A Poetical Rhapsody* are not his first known literary efforts. Before his continental travels, Davison wrote *The Masque of Proteus* as the climactic performance for *Gesta Grayorum*—grand revels held by members of Gray's Inn in winter of 1594-1595, where participants were not the "Overbearing aristocrats" of the Accession Day tilts (McCoy, "Lord of Liberty: Francis Davison and the Cult of Elizabeth," 215-16). See Desmond Bland, *Gesta Grayorum* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1968).

<sup>184</sup> McCoy, "Lord of Liberty: Francis Davison and the Cult of Elizabeth," 223. According to Mary Hobbs, *A Poetical Rhapsody*—"The last of the great anthologies"—seems to offer the fruits of "the private collection of its compiler, Francis Davison. It includes his own and his brothers' poems and those of distant relatives such as Philip Sidney and Thomas Spelman" (*Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts* [England: Scholar Press, 1992], 23).

poems.<sup>185</sup> Richard C. McCoy claims that the collection is “marked by its political allegiances,” which place Davison alongside the Sidney and Essex factions while emphasizing intellectual freedom as an escape from the political repression of the court and the cult of Elizabeth.<sup>186</sup> Whether the book became popular for the value of its poetry or the interest in its politics, it sold. Davison apparently assisted with two additional seventeenth-century editions of *A Poetical Rhapsody* (1608 and 1611), and another was printed posthumously (1621).<sup>187</sup> In none of these editions did Davison include his metrical psalm translations, which were not published in the seventeenth century.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> “Hymn in Praise of Music” and “Ten Sonnets to Philomel” (both signed “I. D.”) were once attributed to Donne. Davison editor Nicholas Harris Nicolas suggested that these poems probably were composed by Sir John Davies (*The Poetical Rhapsody: To Which Are Added, Several Other Pieces, by Francis Davison. With Memoirs and Notes, by Nicholas Harris Nicolas, Esq.* [London: William Pickering, Chancery Lane, 1826]). Nicolas later reissued a section of his edition of *The Poetical Rhapsody as Psalms: Translated by Francis and Christopher Davison*, ed. by Sir N. H. Nicolas (London, 1826). Subsequent Davison editor A. H. Bullen argued based on style that the poems are certainly by Davies, not by Donne; Bullen claims that Donne’s authorship “will be rejected by all who have any acquaintance with his authentic poetry” (*Davison’s Poetical Rhapsody*, vol. 1 [London: George Bell and Sons, 1890], lxxxiii). But Bullen did suggest that the anonymous ode “Absence, hear thou my protestation” (vol. 2, 117-18) was written by Donne, adding, “apart from *evidence of style*, there is early MS. authority for assigning the poem to Donne,” which he fails to describe (vol. 1, lxxxiv. *Emphasis added*). According to editor Louise Brown Osborn, John Hoskyns authored “Absence, hear thou my protestation” (*The Life, Letters, and Writings of John Hoskyns 1566-1638* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937], 192-93). Sullivan lists thirteen extant manuscripts known to contain this poem in *The First and Second Dalhousie Manuscripts: Poems and Prose by John Donne and Others. A Facsimile Edition* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988), 204.

<sup>186</sup> McCoy, “Lord of Liberty: Francis Davison and the Cult of Elizabeth,” 224. McCoy claims that after Essex’s demise, which dashed any hopes for Davison’s advancement, Davison rebuked the queen in *Poetical Rhapsody*. McCoy argues, “several of the lyrics included in this influential collection seem designed to undermine rather than support the cult of Elizabeth at a point when its pretensions were increasingly doubtful” (216). Marotti also points out that in Davison’s epistle “To the Reader” he stations himself alongside Sidney to authorize his own poetical compositions and publications (*Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*, 235-36). According to Marotti, Davison dedicates his work to Sidney’s nephew William Herbert, earl of Pembroke, for patronage, as well as to further associate himself with the Sidney family (316-17).

<sup>187</sup> The work was not printed again until 1814 when Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges edited the collection (*Davison’s Poetical Rhapsody* [Kent: Printed at the private press of Lee Priory, by Johnson and Warwick, 1814-17]).

<sup>188</sup> Nicolas suggests the “possibility” that the “grauer Worke” Davison mentions as his next project in the 1602 preface to *Poetical Rhapsody* could be his projected *Relation of England*, though it “can not be determined” (*The Poetical Rhapsody*, xlix). Davison outlines ideas regarding this historical account in MS Harley 304, folio 79. Davison editor Hyder Edward Rollins, however, points out that the “Worke” could refer either to *Relation of England* or to the metrical translations of Psalms (*A Poetical Rhapsody 1602-1621*, vol. 2 [Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1931], 96).

Knowledge of Davison as a translator of psalms into English verse comes only from the three extant seventeenth-century manuscripts previously mentioned, which contain poetical psalms composed by Davison, his brother Christopher, and other poets identified as “Jos. Be.,” “Rich. Cripps,” and “Th. Carry,” probably Joseph Bryan, Richard Gipps, and Thomas Carew. Although the psalm collections are nearly identical, there are minor differences among the manuscripts. While MS Harley 6930 contains only the psalms and no intended recipient (extant), MS Harley 3357 and MS Rawlinson Poet. 61 are dedicated to specific patrons and contain additional works, such as letters and hymns. Though expansive and thorough, the manuscripts are flawed: for example, MS Rawlinson Poet. 61 contains a misplaced title-page for meditations (found later in the manuscript) after Davison’s twenty-third psalm.<sup>189</sup>

Though each manuscript attributes “Psalm 137” to “F. D.,” there are many reasons to question Davison’s authorship. First, the Crane manuscripts contain multiple verbal similarities in “Psalm 137” not found in seventeenth-century printed editions, suggesting that Crane’s original copy of the poem was quite different from the one held by Donne’s verse editors.<sup>190</sup> Either Donne or Davison could have acquired a copy of a poem originally composed by the other. Yet, while no extant evidence indicates that Donne gathered Davison’s poems, manuscript evidence proves beyond a doubt that Davison collected Donne’s verse. Davison remarked *in his own hand* in a fragment

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<sup>189</sup> The title-page reads, “Meditations vpon the I. & 13. Verses of the 17<sup>th</sup> Chap<sup>r</sup>. of Iob:” composed “by w. Austin esq<sup>r</sup>.” Apparently, the leaf was misplaced when the book was bound.

<sup>190</sup> There are several unusual variants in MS Harley 3357 and in the Crane collections, as can be seen in Appendix 3. British Library MS Add. 29427 seems to follow the Crane manuscripts/MS Harley 3357 tradition as well, echoing the “mournfull cryes” (MS Add. 29427, fol. 20v) of these manuscript versions; however, MS Add. 29427 only contains two stanzas of the poem to consult. A number of explanations for the two verbal traditions are possible. For example, Donne could have revised an early draft of “Psalm 137.” Davison conceivably acquired an early version from his friend Donne while Davison was composing verse psalms and contemplating a printed collection. The early draft could have survived in Davison’s papers, later to be found and mistakenly attributed to Davison in Crane’s manuscripts.

housed in MS Harley 298 that he intended to acquire “Satyres, Elegies, Epigrams &c. by Iohn Don” (fol. 159v), works listed prominently among Davison’s “Manuscripts to gett.”<sup>191</sup> Apparently, Davison planned to add to a collection he already had initiated, for he possessed “Iohn Duns Satyres,” though lent to “my br. Christopher” (fol. 159r). The desired poems appear beneath a brief section outlining poets whose psalms Davison aimed to gather, which suggests that Donne’s verse came to mind just after Davison recalled other psalm translators.<sup>192</sup> Davison was more than a Donne aficionado; he was a Donne collector.

Since Davison definitely sought and acquired Donne’s verse, we must recognize the possibility of poetic modeling. Though either poet could have modeled verse on the metrical form of “Psalm XXXVIII” (for the Sidney psalter circulated in manuscript long before its publication), we cannot be certain that Davison read the poems, whereas Donne’s verse tribute elucidates his awareness and approbation. Similarity between “Psalm 137” and Davison’s “Induction” might reflect Davison modeling poems on Donne’s verse, work he clearly admired and collected. After Davison’s death, “Psalm 137” could have been found among his papers and mistakenly attributed to him in posthumous collections. Davison’s papers were shuffled to several owners before 1626,

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<sup>191</sup> Beside this note Davison wrote, “Q<sup>re</sup>. some from Eleaz. Hodgson. & Ben: Iohnson,” whose poems Davison also desired (fol. 159v). MS Harley 298 is a folio book that contains loose notes, fragments, and papers bound together; many items pertain to Sir Simonds D’Ewes. Most contents of folios 153-60, which contain lists of books and other papers, seem to pertain to Davison, many written by Davison himself. For example, Davison compiled a list of 53 Italian works, each accompanied by the initials “FD.” or “P.W.,” entitled “A Note of all y<sup>e</sup> Relations w<sup>ch</sup> I caried into France both mine owne & M<sup>r</sup> Wroaths” (fol. 154r). Davison noted next to three items that each was “lent to M<sup>r</sup> A. Bacon” (acknowledging Davison’s acquaintance with Anthony Bacon), while another item is “in hands of M<sup>r</sup> Smyth,” Davison’s tutor and travel companion.

<sup>192</sup> Davison planned to collect metrical “Psalmes” composed by “y<sup>e</sup> Countes of Pembroke. Q<sup>re</sup> if they shall not bee printed,” “Iosuah Siluester,” “Sir Iohn Harrington,” and “Ioseph Hall” (fol. 159v). Though this note demonstrates that Davison was aware of the Sidney psalms, we have no evidence that he succeeded in acquiring them. Among other items Davison hoped to acquire are “POEMS of all sorts,” both “Diuine” and “Humane,” “Anagrams,” “Letters of all sorts. especially by y<sup>e</sup> late E. of Essex,” and “Sports ^masks^ & Entertaynments, to y<sup>e</sup> Late Queen. The King. &c.” dating this fragment after Elizabeth’s death in 1603.



when Crane prepared what seems to be the first of his three collections. The last known possessor was Sir Thomas Wilson, keeper of the records, who was issued a warrant by the privy council in 1619 to seize William and Francis Davison's papers from Ralph Starkey, who apparently obtained these manuscripts from Francis's sister Catherine and her husband, William Duncombe.<sup>193</sup> Considering this disorder, one can imagine the scenario that Pebworth describes:

A member of the coterie has among his papers unattributed copies of poems, in many cases in his own hand, by other members of the group. When, after his death, his poems are collected for publication, these noncanonical works are included, with no intention to deceive but without much concern for what print poets consider important: correct attribution.<sup>194</sup>

Davison, a member of Donne's coterie, had both means and motive to acquire a copy of Donne's poem for his planned collection of metrical psalms. Though Donne's poem probably lay unattributed among Davison's papers, it actually might have been assigned to "I. D." Crane, expecting to find psalms by "F. D.," easily could have misread "I" as "F," for the capital letters are nearly identical in many italic hands, as demonstrated in the British Library MS Add. 25707 version of "Psalm 137."<sup>195</sup>

Hamlin in effect alludes to the possibility that Davison might have modeled poetry on Donne's verse, proposing, "It is intriguing that Davison's verse introduction to

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<sup>193</sup> Nicolas calls attention to the presence of Starkey's hand in Davison's notes on folio 158v, where Starkey's memoranda, partly marked through, accompany Davison's original notes (*The Poetical Rhapsody*, xlv). In addition, Starkey also seems to have prepared the lists on folios 153r-v, 156r-v, and 157r, suggesting that Francis Davison's lists probably were among the Davison papers that Starkey obtained. See Beal's thorough discussion in *In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and Their Makers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 88-92.

<sup>194</sup> Pebworth, "John Donne, Coterie Poetry, and the Text as Performance," 69-70.

<sup>195</sup> In the manuscript copy, "F" in line 3 is quite similar to "I" in line 31.

his psalm translations includes lines that sound strikingly like Donne's 'Upon the Translation of the Psalms by Sir Philip Sidney, and the Countess of Pembroke his Sister.'"<sup>196</sup> Hamlin acknowledges the difficulty in establishing with certainty whether or not poetic borrowing occurred and, if so, who borrowed from whom. Yet, we have no reason to assume that Donne admired Davison's verse, while extant manuscripts inform us that Davison admired Donne's.

Questions about modeling failed to contribute to early editorial decisions regarding "Psalm 137," for the first editor to print Davison's psalm translations apparently was unaware that the poem was attributed to Donne elsewhere. Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges only acknowledged one manuscript as his source for Davison's psalms: MS Harley 6930. Brydges made no reference to Donne's potential authorship, even to refute the assertion. Nicholas Harris Nicolas, subsequent editor of Davison's psalms, acknowledged that "Psalm 137" was "included among the poems of Donne," but Nicolas chose to attribute the poem to Davison merely "from the *belief* that it was written by Francis Davison."<sup>197</sup> Davison's next editor A. H. Bullen included the psalms in an appendix, pointing to MSS Harley 6930 and 3357 and MS Rawlinson Poet. 61 as sources.<sup>198</sup> Bullen, however, mentioned no manuscripts or early printed editions that attribute the poem to Donne, nor the fact that Crane inscribed all three manuscripts.

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<sup>196</sup> Hamlin, *Psalm Culture and Early Modern Literature*, 132. Though editors typically date this poem to 1621 (after Davison's death) or later because of mention of the countess's death, there is no reason to assume that Donne had not written earlier versions without the reference since he could have been familiar with the Sidney psalms as early as the 1590s. Davison could have seen such a version.

<sup>197</sup> Nicolas, ed., *The Poetical Rhapsody*, cxx. Emphasis added.

<sup>198</sup> Crane's request for patronage from "his much-esteemed good Frend, M<sup>r</sup>. Iohn Peirs" in MS Rawlinson Poet. 61 proves interesting, for "Iohn Peirs" probably was nephew to John Piers, Archbishop of York (1522/3-1594). While little is known of this nephew, Archbishop Piers was staunchly anti-papery; he made ridding parishes of all remnants of Catholic practices an important mission in each appointment. Perhaps Davison, son of the man publicly responsible for the death of Mary of Scots, would be a more readily acceptable poet to Piers than the questionably Catholic Donne.

Thus, Grierson's subsequent authorial claim traces back to Brydges, who attributed "Psalm 137" to Davison based on knowledge of only one manuscript and no awareness of Donne's potential authorship.

Notably, Davison scholars repeatedly call attention to the notion that Davison's metrical psalms far surpass his other arguably pedestrian poems, pointing to "Psalm 137" in particular. Brydges praises "Some of these Versions" as

executed with an elegance and harmony of language and metre, and a picturesque and plaintive spirit of poetry, which, in my opinion, exalt the powers of Francis Davison beyond any thing in the *Rhapsody*.<sup>199</sup>

Certainly "Psalm 137" is among the "Some" he mentions, for the poem vastly exceeds other Davison psalms. Take, for example, "Psalm 23"—Davison's other psalm translation in the "Psalm 137" verse form:

God, who the Vniuerse doth hold,  
in his Fold,  
is my Shepherd kind, and heedfull:  
is my Shepherd, and doth keepe  
Me, his Sheepe  
still supplide with all things needfull. (lines 1-6)<sup>200</sup>

"Psalm 23" seems repetitive, even awkward, and the poem fails to match the eloquence of its scriptural source. When Nicolas suggests that Davison's "translations of the Psalms are not only the happiest of his efforts, but...have strong pretensions to be placed amongst

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<sup>199</sup> Brydges, ed., *Davison's Poetical Rhapsody*, 24.

<sup>200</sup> MS Rawlinson Poet. 61.

the best versions of the inspired monarch which have ever appeared,”<sup>201</sup> undoubtedly he recalls “Psalm 137” and not “Psalm 23,” which hardly appears worthy of such praise. Hamlin places “Psalm 137” among Davison’s “most accomplished and interesting” poems, though (ironically) Grierson dismissed the poem primarily for seeming sub-par for Donne. Hamlin remarks, “It is perhaps a mark of Davison’s accomplishment as a poet that the translation of Psalm 137 now attributed to him was published as Donne’s in the seventeenth century.”<sup>202</sup> Quite likely, the poem’s apparent superiority to Davison’s other verse actually stems from a more gifted poet’s authorship.

### *Attributions to Donne in Manuscripts*

Were it not for Crane we would have no reason even to suggest that Davison wrote “Psalm 137.” Donne’s authorship was not questioned by any other collectors or scribes, who point to Donne as author in British Library MS Add. 25707, MS Rawlinson Poet. 117,<sup>203</sup> MS Eng. misc. e. 13,<sup>204</sup> MS Tanner 466,<sup>205</sup> and Cambridge MS Add. 29.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Nicolas, ed., *The Poetical Rhapsody*, liv. Bullen, like Brydges and Nicolas, calls attention to Davison’s achievement: “Our poets are seldom successful in dealing with the psalms; but Davison’s attempts are above the average” (*Davison’s Poetical Rhapsody*, vol. 2, 153).

<sup>202</sup> Hamlin, *Psalm Culture and Early Modern Literature*, 133, 132.

<sup>203</sup> This manuscript is called O34 by *Variorum* editors. O34 was partly compiled by Christopher Wase (1627-1690) of King’s College, Cambridge, and printer to Oxford University. It contains English and Latin works, including poems, epigrams, anagrams, aphorisms, and Wase’s inventory of books, among other works and many blank leaves. Beal adds that this quarto verse miscellany of 279 leaves, containing 37 Donne poems, was composed in the mid-seventeenth century. The manuscript was incorporated by editors Gardner, Milgate, and Shawcross (Beal, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, part 1, 254). The *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* and *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* have proven invaluable research tools for this study.

<sup>204</sup> MS Eng. misc. e. 13, known as “D<sup>r</sup>. Lynnet’s Common Place Book,” is a difficult manuscript to read. However, the poem definitely is attributed to “Iohn Donne.”

<sup>205</sup> Known as O43 by *Variorum* editors, this manuscript contains many verse translations and other religious poems, including verse by Cowley, Wotton, and Crashaw. Notes indicate that the poems are written “in the hand of William Sancroft, archbp of Canterbury” (fol. 1r), previously discussed as scribe of MS Tanner 299. There is no reason to doubt the validity of notes pointing to Sancroft as scribe of MS Tanner 466, especially since the manuscript primarily contains religious verse. However, we cannot date the manuscript with certainty.

Were we determining authorship based on the number of ascriptions alone, Donne ascriptions outnumber Davison ascriptions five to three (five to one, if two Crane manuscripts are recognized as mere copies of the first).<sup>207</sup> In reality, the importance of the number of ascriptions should not be overstated. If a poem is misattributed once and the incorrect information is copied and recopied, its manuscript appearances lose significance in determining authorship, though they remain beneficial in considering a poem's reception history. More relevant is knowledge of the manuscripts containing the

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<sup>206</sup> The manuscript, known as C1 by *Variorum* editors, is fairly damaged by water and scribbling. According to Beal, the manuscript is a verse miscellany in several hands with 35 Donne poems in three scripts. Many poems are ascribed to "I.D."; others are attributed to "J.B." (Beaumont) and "T.P." The manuscript does not fall easily into a group, but the text is related to the Skipwith manuscript. It is a folio of 30 leaves and 20 stubs of extracted leaves created circa 1620-1633, once owned by Edward Smyth (Beal, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, part 1, 255).

<sup>207</sup> In only two extant manuscripts is "Psalm 137" unattributed: British Library MSS Add. 29427 and 27407. MS Add. 29427 contains a collection of verses set to music, primarily by scribe Thomas Myriell. Scholars believe that this manuscript contains "first copies of many of the items subsequently included in Myriell's *Tristitiaie remedium* (1616)" (Ian Payne, "The Handwriting of John Ward," *Music & Letters* 65.2 [April 1984]: 187). Thus, Craig Monson convincingly dates the section of the manuscript containing this poem set to music (fols. 20v-21r) to 1613-1616, causing 1616 to appear the latest possible date of composition of "Psalm 137" ("Thomas Myriell's Manuscript Collection: One View of Musical Taste in Jacobean London," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 30, no. 3 [Autumn 1977]: 425). Martin Pierson was a Catholic sympathizer and, as of 1624 or 1625, master of the choristers at St. Paul's Cathedral, providing a clear connection to Dean Donne. Pierson set only the first two stanzas of the poem to music, though all lyrical phrases are immediately repeated, multiple times in many cases. British Library Music Collections curator Nicolas Bell kindly informed me that, although this manuscript contains only Altus parts, the Cantus parts of the original part-books (which presumably are lost) could have contained the remaining stanzas of "Psalm 137" without music. MS Add. 27407 is an unusual collection of letters, songs, plays, poems, and other items composed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in many scripts. This manuscript of 155 folios contains some Donne poems and is labeled B14 by *Variorum* editors. It is one of three volumes (MSS Add. 27406-27408) containing poetical pieces from collections of Oliver and Peter Le Neve and Thomas Martin of Palgrave. This untitled version of the poem (fol. 65r-v) appears in a secretary hand within a letter without signature, addressed only to "My most honoured Lord." Most items in this manuscript are unattributed, but, in the case of this poem, there is a brief epistolary introduction: "I forgott my self when I sent yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>pp</sup> word, that I had not y<sup>e</sup> Psalm: yo<sup>w</sup> sent for; I doe not vse to paraphrase so much vppon my other translated Psalmes, but tye my self more strictly to the Originall, holding those Translations best y<sup>e</sup> suffer y<sup>e</sup> least Translation: But thus; Sings the bolder Poet to the 137<sup>th</sup> Psalm." Although various interpretations are possible, it seems that the author implies that this verse translation was composed by a "bolder Poet" than the letter-writer, a psalm versifier as well. Though this "bolder Poet" is not specifically named, surely Donne more than most poets has been accused of boldness in his verse. Grierson interpreted the letter differently—as an indication that the letter-writer also composed the psalm; Grierson mentions that the "handwriting and style of the letter are not Donne's" (*The Poems of John Donne*, vol. 2, cxlix). However, the handwriting is not Davison's either.

poems: their transmission histories, their scribes and collectors, their material details, their contexture.

The Skipwith manuscript contributes significantly toward identification of the author of “Psalm 137.” Grierson noted that one of the four primary hands to contribute Donne poems to the Skipwith manuscript “inserts the larger number of the poems unquestionably by Donne in close succession.”<sup>208</sup> As mentioned, “Psalm 137” appears near the middle of this group of thirty poems assigned to Donne. The other twenty-nine poems are recognized as Donne’s. Yet Grierson, who praised both this scribe and these texts, excluded “Psalm 137” from Donne’s canon with little explanation.<sup>209</sup> In addition, if Gardner’s suggestion is correct, Philip King—brother to “Donne’s younger and most admiring friend” Henry<sup>210</sup>—had access to this manuscript and contributed to it; yet Philip never “corrected” the attribution of this poem from Donne to Davison. The poem’s attribution to Donne in this important section of a manuscript prized by his editors is particularly significant; if misattributed, the poem proves anomalous.

MS Rawlinson Poet. 117 also contains the poem (fols. 267r-266r) with the ascription “by D. Donne.”<sup>211</sup> In this manuscript (also known as the Wase manuscript) the verse follows another poem of interest—Davison’s “Psalm 23,” without an ascription. In addition to containing “Psalm 23,” the Wase manuscript resembles the Crane collections in another way: it maintains peculiar verbal readings of “Psalm 137” present in the Crane tradition of the poem. Knowledge of Davison’s “Psalm 23” and of the Crane

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<sup>208</sup> Grierson, ed., *The Poems of John Donne*, vol. 2, clii.

<sup>209</sup> In this section are also a few poems written by another hand (the same script that composed the “Index”), but these poems clearly were added later in available space, possibly by Philip King.

<sup>210</sup> Crum, “Notes on the Physical Characteristics of some Manuscripts of the Poems of Donne and of Henry King,” 21.

<sup>211</sup> This section is written upside-down and probably was attached later to the main section.

version of “Psalme 137” reveals this scribe’s probable familiarity with one or more of Crane’s manuscripts. Yet, the Wase manuscript assigns its “Psalm 137” to “D. Donne.” Since this scribe was familiar with the Crane version, this attribution seems to indicate a conscious choice in favor of Donne over Davison.

Granted, “by D. Donne” could have been added to the Wase manuscript by another scribe who later contributed the ascription. Though not radically dissimilar, the scripts of the poem and the acknowledgment are not identical. If “by D. Donne” were added by someone else, this reader certainly could have provided the ascription shortly after the poem was copied into the manuscript, but it also is possible that someone attributed the poem to Donne later based on knowledge of “Psalme 137” in Donne’s *Poems*. Similarly, “Psalm. 137” in MS Eng. misc. e. 13 (fol. 10r-v) is labeled “Iohn Donne” in a larger script than that of the poem; distinct forms of “D” suggest the possibility of another hand. In yet a third script, “this is printed” is written faintly in the upper right corner, indicating that at least the third scribe recognized “Psalme 137” from *Poems*, though the second hand most likely wrote “Iohn Donne” much earlier.<sup>212</sup> Unfortunately, we lack means to establish certainty regarding this scribe’s knowledge (or lack thereof) of the poem in print. In MS Tanner 466, on the other hand, the scribe doubtless recorded “Psalme 137” (fol. 17r-v) after its appearance in print, for a nearby note (likely in the same hand) reads “D<sup>r</sup> Donne poem. p. 327,” indicating the 1649, 1650, or 1654 printed editions of Donne’s *Poems*. While the note also could have been added later, the scenario seems less questionable in this case than that of MS Eng. misc. e. 13. Though these ascriptions contribute modest substantive evidence to the authorship

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<sup>212</sup> Another nearby poem is dated 1642. However, we cannot date the manuscript with certainty.

controversy, MS Eng. misc. e. 13 and MS Tanner 466 demonstrate further that contemporary readers accepted the poem as a Donne creation.

Cambridge MS Add. 29, on the other hand, adds considerably to the authorial case. Peter Beal dates the manuscript circa 1620-1633, likely compiled prior to the 1633 *Poems*. Like the Skipwith manuscript, Cambridge MS Add. 29 contains a large group of Donne poems in a single secretary script with “Psalm 137” (fol. 5r-v) near the middle of the group.<sup>213</sup> After composition, another scribe afforded the poem generous attention: it contains many alterations, such as strike-throughs and word changes. Apparently, the poem was revisited often, yet the attribution to Donne never changed. Particular interest in this manuscript lies on folio 8r, which contains the signature of an “Edward Smyth” at the bottom of the page. Nothing about this apparent owner of Cambridge MS Add. 29 (also known as the Edward Smyth manuscript) has been uncovered, and no “Edward Smyth” is known among Donne’s acquaintance. However, there is an “Edward Smyth” among Francis Davison’s acquaintance: Davison’s tutor. Smyth and Davison traveled to the continent together in the 1590s, as demonstrated by the queen’s license for “francis Davison of Graissinn in the Countie of Midd. gentleman, and Edward Smythe M<sup>r</sup> of Arts to passe out of this our Realme” for “the space of three yeares.”<sup>214</sup> Letters from abroad corroborate the fact that they traveled together. Smyth wrote William Davison multiple

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<sup>213</sup> Its surrounding poems are identical to those in the Skipwith manuscript and appear in the same order; immediately preceding the poem are “The Flea” (untitled) and “Loves Infiniteness” (entitled “Mon tout” in both manuscripts), and “Song: Sweetest Love I Do Not Go” (untitled) follows it. Cambridge MS Add. 29 also contains a poem by “W. Skip.” on folio 19v, suggesting that some poems in one manuscript probably were copied from the other.

<sup>214</sup> MS Harley 38 reads, “A Licence to trauallye for Francis Dauison and Edward Smith” in neat italic (fol. 188v). Inside is a document with a royal seal and the signature of “Elizabeth.” The license indicates that they will have one servant, two horses, and fifty pounds or less with them and should be allowed by all to pass.



times to request increases in their allowance due to his pupil's extravagant spending.<sup>215</sup>

Records of Oxford and Cambridge graduates point to only two potential identities for Davison's tutor, both Cambridge graduates and one (a London resident) much more likely.<sup>216</sup> If Davison's tutor is the same Edward Smyth to have owned this manuscript—a strong possibility since Smyth's student was a friend and admirer of Donne—then the attribution of the poem to Donne in the Edward Smyth manuscript carries considerable weight.<sup>217</sup> The scenario previously suggested (that of the poem being found among Davison's papers and accidentally misattributed) seems even more likely, for Smyth could have obtained a copy of the scriptural verse from Davison and then copied Donne's "Psalm 137" into his miscellany. Whatever the transmission history of the poem, only a few leaves separate "Psalm 137" from Edward Smyth's signature in Cambridge MS Add. 29, yet Smyth did not challenge Donne's authorship.

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<sup>215</sup> MS Harley 296. This manuscript contains "A Collection of Tracts, Letters, & loose Papers (as well originals, as antient copies) relating to the Affairs of Spaine, Italy, Germany, Denmarke, &c. or to the Transactions between England and those Countreys; now bound up together" (British Library manuscript guide). Folios 111 and 114 contain original letters written by Edward Smyth to William Davison about Smyth's travels with Francis Davison. Folio 111 is dated "16 of ffebruarie from venice" and asks for money to be supplied quickly because of Francis's luxurious lifestyle. Smyth mentions that he has "written diuers letters to yo<sup>r</sup> Lo: heretofore, and all of them allmoste to this effecte" and that he and Francis Davison have too long been in Venice, "a place of verie greate expences." Smyth and Davison have borrowed money from others without compensation, which has brought "shame to o<sup>r</sup> selfs," and they desperately need the money they expect to be coming from William Davison. The second letter (fol. 114r-v) is dated "22 of Ianuarie" of 1595 (presumably 1596) and complains about similar woes, asking William Davison to raise their annuity from 100 pounds per year to 200 pounds or to call them home: "I besech yo<sup>w</sup> (S<sup>r</sup>) eather to make account of spendinge 200<sup>l</sup> yerely, or very neere, or else to call me home who have endured." He adds that Francis stubbornly will not allow them to leave the expensive city: "I would have removed to Padowa longe sence, yf the exportation of mony from Stoad, w<sup>ch</sup> we as yet haue not of."

<sup>216</sup> *Alumni Cantabrigiensis: A Biographical List of All known Students, Graduates and Holders of Office at the University of Cambridge, From the Earliest Times to 1900*, comp. John Venn and J. A. Venn, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), 96. Admittedly, Smyth's signature in his 1590s letters from the continent looks little like the signature in the Edward Smyth manuscript, though such dissimilarity could easily be explained by the decades separating their creation.

<sup>217</sup> It is also possible that this manuscript belonged to a later Edward Smyth of the same family, for Cambridge records indicate early and mid seventeenth-century descendants of the man likely to have been Davison's tutor who keep the name "Edward Smyth" (*Alumni Cantabrigiensis*, vol. 4, 96).

***“Psalm 137” and “The Lamentations of Jeremy”***

Substantial manuscript evidence points to Donne as author of “Psalm 137.” Beyond this material support—a necessary foundation for authorial assertions—additional biographical and stylistic elements enhance the likelihood of Donne’s authorship, which appears assured when one considers the poem in conjunction with Donne’s only accepted verse translation, “The Lamentations of Jeremy, for the Most Part According to Tremelius.” Psalm 137 and Lamentations depict the same event: the exile of Jews after Jerusalem’s fall to Babylon. The primary difference between the scriptural works is that Lamentations, which provides the basis for two extant Donne sermons,<sup>218</sup> metaphorizes the lament, turning Jerusalem into a crying widow who mourns the loss of her children. Hamlin suggests that several poets, including Spenser in *The Ruines of Time*, connect Psalm 137 with the weeping widow of Lamentations because of their common subject and the notion that both mourning episodes are brought on by memory.<sup>219</sup> Donne’s “Lamentations” demonstrates that he did in fact attempt to versify scripture, entering the culture of Biblical translation, and that Donne chose a Biblical book that explicitly recalls “Psalm 137.”

In addition, though we must not place excessive weight on verbal parallels, “Lamentations” contains unique echoes of “Psalm 137.” The “groines” mentioned twice in “Psalm 137” resound in “Lamentations,” when, for example, “all her people groane” (line 41). According to *A Concordance to the English Poems of John Donne*, three of the

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<sup>218</sup> Donne, *Sermons*, eds. George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson, vol. 10 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953-1962), 192-212 on verse 3.1; vol. 4, 235-63 on verse 4.20.

<sup>219</sup> Hamlin, *Psalm Culture and Early Modern Literature*, 222-25.

six manifestations of “groan” in Donne’s poems appear in “Lamentations.”<sup>220</sup>

“Desolate,” a word featured prominently in the second stanza of “Psalm 137,” appears twice in “Lamentations”: “Because mount *Sion* desolate doth lye” (line 381) and “He stops my way, teares me, made desolate” (line 191)—a line that vividly recalls “Psalm 137,” for “Tearinge y<sup>e</sup> ayre w<sup>th</sup> our cryes” occurs just four lines prior to mention of “desolate.” “Lamentations,” in fact, contains the only acknowledged appearances of “desolate” among Donne’s verse. Such is also the case for “forlorne,” which is found in the third stanza of “Psalm 137” in

when we sittinge all forlorne

thus in scorne

our proud spoylers gan deride us. (lines 16-18)

“Forlorne” emerges among Donne’s accepted poems in “Lamentations” alone.<sup>221</sup>

Similarly, “affliction” of “Thine affliction miserable” (“Psalm 137,” line 33) is rarely employed by Donne, yet “Lamentations” contains three of its four appearances.<sup>222</sup>

“Desolate,” “forlorne,” and “affliction”—words that do not appear in the prominent contemporary Biblical translations of Psalm 137—do appear in Donne’s only accepted scriptural translation, a poem discussing the same exile as the psalm.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Homer Carroll Combs and Zay Rusk Sullens, *A Concordance to the English Poems of John Donne* (Chicago: Packard and Company, 1940). I have referred to this concordance for the discussion of “desolate,” “forlorne,” and “affliction” as well. Though *Concordance* does not reflect recent re-evaluation of Donne’s canon, consideration of such verbal echoes still proves useful.

<sup>221</sup> “The foe prevailes, forlorne my children are” (line 64) and “Now in the streets forlorne have perished” (line 286).

<sup>222</sup> “O Lord my’ affliction, for the Foe growes bold” (line 36); “I am the man which have affliction seene” (line 177); and “My wormewood, hemlocke, and affliction” (line 204). In addition, the only known occurrence of “afflictions” among Donne’s poems is found in “Lamentations” in “Unto great bondage, and afflictions” (line 9).

<sup>223</sup> These words do not appear in the Geneva, Bishops, Douay-Rheims, Coverdale, or Authorized versions of Psalm 137, nor in the verse translation of Psalm 137 found in Sternhold and Hopkins’ *The whole booke of Psalmes*.

David Novarr calls attention to a striking conundrum: “It is as puzzling to try to account for Donne’s decision to English Lamentations rather than, say, some of the Psalms or the Song of Solomon or parts of Isaiah as it is to try to establish its date.”<sup>224</sup> When one takes into account Hamlin’s assertion that most prominent Renaissance poets attempted psalm versification, “Psalme 137” fills a surprising void in Donne’s extensive repertoire.<sup>225</sup> The poem’s contemporary readers and the seventeenth-century editors of Donne’s printed verse collections (including his son) did not question his authorship of

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<sup>224</sup> David Novarr, *The Disinterred Muse: Donne’s Texts and Contexts* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1980), 145. Graham Roebuck similarly recognizes, “Donne’s unequivocal description of the poetical parts of Scripture as ‘The highest matter in the noblest form’ (l.11) in his poem praising the Sidney translation of the Psalms, is no empty phrase. On the contrary, it makes one wonder why he completed only one such exercise, or whether it was his sole attempt” (“Donne’s *Lamentations of Jeremy* Reconsidered,” *John Donne Journal* 10 [1991]: 38). Both Roebuck and John Klause call into question the traditional argument that Donne’s “Lamentations” must be a late poem because of verbal echoes with the 1611 Authorized version of the Bible. Klause argues that dating “Lamentations” is more complicated than Gardner surmised and that Donne wrote versions of “Lamentations” on two separate occasions (“The Two Occasions of Donne’s ‘Lamentations of Jeremy,’” *Modern Philology* 90, no. 3 [1993]: 338). He claims that Donne composed the original draft in the late 1580s or the 1590s, long before the remaining version was written, and he attempts to use manuscript evidence to corroborate his case. For example, Klause suggests that what we know of the Dolau Cothi manuscript—that it contained many other Donne poems with “Lamentations,” all of which were dated before 1615—indicates that the poem might have been written earlier than modern editors suggest (339). Roebuck suggests that the supposed echoes of the Authorized version actually originate in the Geneva version (1560) or in Tremellius’s translation (1579), as Donne’s title suggests; thus a much earlier date of composition is possible. Though Roebuck does not argue adamantly for a specific period, he suggests, “it would make sense to assign it to the earlier 1590s” (42). Peabworth calls attention to a book printed in 1587 containing both Christopher Featherstone’s English prose translation of Lamentations from Tremellius’s version and a verse translation of Lamentations that Featherstone says was given him by a friend (“John Donne’s ‘Lamentations’ and Christopher Featherstone’s *Lamentations...in prose and meeter* [1587],” in *Wrestling with God: Literature & Theology in the English Renaissance, Essays to Honour Paul Grant Stanwood*, eds. Mary Ellen Henley and W. Speed Hill [Vancouver, Canada: M.E. Henley, 2001], 85-98). According to Peabworth, the printed verse translation is clearly based on the Geneva version of Lamentations, and Donne follows the verse translation (not the Geneva version) when the poem deviates from the original, which qualifies the notion that Donne made use of the Geneva prose version for his own verse translation. Recognizing Donne’s incorporation of these two printed versions allows further disagreement with the notion that Donne was influenced by the Authorized version: “the way is left open for those who would argue that ‘Lamentations’ is an early work, though the influence of Featherstone’s 1587 book in no way precludes a later date of composition” (92).

<sup>225</sup> Novarr calls attention to how strange it is that Donne supposedly never tried his hand at psalm versification: “Many of his friends and contemporaries had attempted translation of the Psalms. He himself said in the poem of praise he wrote about Sir Philip Sidney and his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, that he could scarcely call the English Church reformed until the Psalms were fitly garbed in English, but not one psalm did he put into verse” (*The Disinterred Muse: Donne’s Texts and Contexts*, 142).

“Psalme 137,” which manuscript and print evidence and consideration of “Lamentations” suggest that he composed.

### *Donne and the Psalms*

Donne’s possible authorship of “Psalme 137” calls for reconsideration of Donne’s attention to the Psalms. His sermons reveal admiration for Psalms, the basis for 34 of Donne’s 160 extant sermons—more than any other Biblical book. In fact, only the Gospels as a group provide material for more sermons.<sup>226</sup> According to Evelyn M. Simpson, Donne shows “intense affection for the *Psalms*”: “He tells us himself that it was his favorite book of the Old Testament, and that one reason for this preference was that the Psalms are poetry, and that the metrical form appealed to him as a poet.”<sup>227</sup>

Hamlin remarks that in a sermon Donne

described the Psalms as the ‘Manna of the Church’ since, just ‘as Manna tasted to every man like that that he liked best, so doe the Psalmes minister Instruction, and satisfaction, to every man, in every emergency and occasion.’<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> For more, see Donne, *Sermons*, especially vol. 10, 295.

<sup>227</sup> Simpson, ed., *John Donne’s Sermons on the Psalms and Gospels, with a Selection of Prayers and Meditations* (Berkeley: University of California Press; London: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 4. Simpson says Donne also preferred Psalms because St. Augustine, his favorite early father, loved them (5). She notes that Donne’s sermons demonstrate that he read Psalms “in the original Hebrew, in the Latin of the Vulgate, and in the English of Coverdale (Prayer Book version), the Geneva Bible, and the King James Bible” (5). Unfortunately, we cannot rely on echoes of these versions in “Psalme 137” for evidence of Donne’s authorship because Davison, well-educated and interested in Psalms, might have read them as well.

<sup>228</sup> Hamlin, *Psalms Culture and Early Modern Literature*, 2. Hamlin is quoting “The second of my Prebend Sermons upon my five Psalmes,” in *Donne’s Prebend Sermons*, ed. Janel M. Mueller (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 91.

Donne so admired Psalm 137, in fact, that he incorporated it into at least three sermons.<sup>229</sup>

Donne's love of the Psalms also is reflected in "Upon the translation of the Psalmes by Sir Philip Sydney, and the Countesse of Pembroke his Sister." As mentioned, Donne was familiar with the Sidney sequence from one of the manuscript versions circulating during his lifetime, though the collection was not published until 1823.<sup>230</sup> According to Novarr, the Sidney psalms are "not scholarly"; Donne praises them not for their erudition but "based on their poetic merit."<sup>231</sup> Though Donne recognizes skillful poetic translations in other languages, he criticizes English versification efforts, lamenting that psalms are "So well attyr'd abroad, so ill at home" (line 38).<sup>232</sup> Such criticism adds further weight to the possibility that Donne raised his own pen at least

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<sup>229</sup> Donne discusses the psalm in *A Sermon Preached at Pauls Cross to the Lords of the Council, and other Honorable Persons, 24. Mart. 1616. [1616/17]: It being the Anniversary of the Kings coming to the Crown, and his Majesty being then gone into Scotland*, a sermon on Proverbs 22.11 ("He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips, the king shall be his friend") (*Sermons*, vol. 1, 183-222, 219). He also mentions the psalm in *Preached at Saint Pauls*, a sermon on Philippians 3.2 ("Beware of the concision") (*Sermons*, vol. 10, 103-18, 114). And Donne discusses Psalm 137.3 in *A Sermon of Commemoration of the Lady Danvers, late Wife of Sir Iohn Danvers. Preach'd at Chilsey, where she was lately buried. By Iohn Donne Dean of St. Pauls, London. I Iuly 1627*, a sermon on 2 Pet. 3.13 ("Neverthelesse, we, according to his promises, looke for new heavens, and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness") (*Sermons*, vol. 8, 61-93, 65). I received assistance gathering this information from Troy D. Reeves, *An Annotated Index to the Sermons of John Donne* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik Universität Salzburg, 1979).

<sup>230</sup> John T. Shawcross, ed., *The Complete Poetry of John Donne*, 388. Novarr mentions that editors believe the countess to have finished a draft of the psalms by 1593, completing the work by 1599 (*The Disinterred Muse: Donne's Texts and Contexts*, 154). According to May, in 1599 Mary Sidney prepared a copy of her Psalter for Queen Elizabeth upon her visit to Wilton; it was to contain a prefatory verse dedication to the queen and a verse elegy for her brother Philip. Mary Sidney "cast each of his [Philip's] forty-three Psalms in a different form, and the countess was quite attentive to these technical matters as she completed the translation and then revised her work for presentation to the queen" (*The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts*, 177).

<sup>231</sup> Novarr, *The Disinterred Muse: Donne's Texts and Contexts*, 147.

<sup>232</sup> Perhaps Donne refers to the many French verse translations of the psalms, though apparently the "two longest, most ambitious, and most complex versions of [Psalm 137] ever written" were those of Jorge de Montemayor and Luís de Camões (Bryant Creel, "Reformist Dialectics and Poetic Adaptations of Psalm 137, 'Super Flumina Babylonis,' in Portugal in the Sixteenth Century," in *Camonianiana Californiana: Commemorating the Quadricentennial of the Death of Luís Vaz de Camões*, eds. Maria de Lourdes Belchior and Enrique Martínez-López [Santa Barbara: Jorge de Sena Center for Port. Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara; Lisbon, & Bandanna: Inst. de Cultura e Língua Port, 1985], 86).

once to translate a psalm. His frustration verges on embarrassment by English efforts to versify psalms (possibly for church songs): “And shall our Church, unto our Spouse and King / More hoarse, more harsh than any other, sing?” (lines 43-44). He praises the Sidney psalter alone: “So though some have, some may some Psalmes translate, / We thy Sydnean Psalmes shall celebrate” (lines 49-50).

Some musical imagery in “Upon the translations” calls to mind Psalm 137, for both works associate exile with muteness while stressing the importance of recalling God’s greatness through songs of praise; memory and music go hand in hand. Donne calls the Sidneys organs for David’s songs, in which they teach us how to sing. Donne imagines that when we reach heaven—where God has “translated these translators” (line 53)—we will hear “th’Extemporall song to sing” (line 51). Angels will sing with harps, the very instruments the Jews hang up in Psalm 137 upon banishment from Jerusalem. Donne also discusses the “three Quires, heaven, earth, and sphears” (line 23) in which “Heaven, hath a song, but no man heares, / The Spheares have Musick, but they have no tongue” (lines 24-25), echoing both the absence of earthly music when God’s people are displaced and the tongues glued to the roofs of their mouths in Psalm 137. The third “Quire” constitutes people who must sing, must praise through song—an imperative straight from Psalm 137.<sup>233</sup> Overall, Donne’s manner of praising the Sidney psalms/songs calls to mind the musical language and message of Psalm 137, suggesting that Donne might have recalled this psalm (perhaps because it is the only psalm he attempted to versify) while composing “Upon the translations.”

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<sup>233</sup> Donne similarly focuses on musical imagery when he discusses Psalm 137 in a sermon, expounding on Babylonian cruelty: “So to the *Israelites* in *Babylon*, when they were in that heaviness, that every breath they breath’d was a *sigh*, their enemies cal’d, *to sing them a song*” (*Sermons*, vol. 8, 65).

Just as “Upon the translations” resonates with “Psalm 137,” the Sidney “Psalm XXXVIII” reflects similarities as well:

But I like a man become,  
Deaf and dumb,  
Little hearing, speaking lesse;  
I ev’ en as such kind of wight,  
Senseles quite,

Word with word do not repress. (lines 37-42)

Like “Psalm XXXVIII,” Psalm 137 concerns a silent speaker, one unable to praise God through speech or song. Donne could have connected these psalms for their emphasis, planting the seed that the verse form of “Psalm XXXVIII” would be appropriate for his psalm translation as well. Donne’s “Upon the translations” certainly demonstrates that he knew and admired the Sidney psalms, making Donne’s imitation of the “Psalm XXXVIII” metrical form viable.

Psalm 137 also seems a likely candidate for translation because, as we know from “Lamentations,” Donne was attracted to its subject—exile, a theme familiar to a man whose family often experienced religious persecution and banishment. Psalm 137 provided solace for Christians who felt like spiritual exiles. Bryant Creel asserts,

This psalm was popular among Renaissance Neoplatonists, since the situation which it presents can be interpreted in terms of spiritual captivity in a chaotic world and the longing for spiritual ascent (escaping Babylon and reaching Jerusalem).<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Creel, “Reformist Dialectics and Poetic Adaptations of Psalm 137, ‘Super Flumina Babylonis,’ in Portugal in the Sixteenth Century,” 86.



The psalm was translated by many on the continent: for example, Montemayor, whose work Donne read, treated the psalm as a discussion on man's banishment from grace (Jerusalem) and into sin (Babylon).<sup>235</sup> The psalm particularly comforted various groups in Renaissance England, for English Catholics believed themselves separated by infidels from their Roman Jerusalem, while English Protestants viewed the corrupt Catholic church as separating Christians from Jerusalem.<sup>236</sup>

Political exiles also would have associated their displacement with the Israelites. Courtiers out of favor with the monarch (particularly Elizabeth I) frequently were banished from court and "encouraged" to go abroad. Sidney, for example, was effectively exiled from court for warning Elizabeth against a Catholic marriage. He, like many who displeased the volatile queen, turned to poetry (including psalm translation) as solace. Surely, dismissed courtiers felt a different form of anxiety than that experienced by papists, but "Despite their differing priorities, translators of Psalm 137 shared fundamental motivations: lament for exile, anxiety over loss, tension between the need to express grief and the inability to do so, and the desire for revenge."<sup>237</sup>

Among spiritual and political exiles were many members of Donne's family. Though Donne's grandfather John Heywood (forced at one point to recant his religion at St. Paul's Cross) never fled the country during Edward VI's reign, many of Heywood's

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>236</sup> For further discussion, see Hamlin, *Psalm Culture and Early Modern Literature*, and Klaus, "The Two Occasions of Donne's 'Lamentations of Jeremy.'"

<sup>237</sup> Hamlin, *Psalm Culture and Early Modern Literature*, 252. Donne briefly expounds on Psalm 137.5-6 in a sermon arguing that the Roman church cannot charge the Anglican church with heresy because "They do not charge us that we deny any article of any antient Creed" for "the whole Church is bound to beleieve all the articles of faith" (*Sermons*, vol. 10, 113). He recognizes that not all churches agree on the "manner of explication of all the articles of faith" (113) but avers that arguing about minor differences is pointless; our "chiefest joy" is "our *own opinions*" and the "Jerusalem," which should be preferred before our "chiefest joy," is "love of the peace of the Church" (114). Thus, a psalm about the sadness of exile becomes a message of tolerance and peace.

Catholic friends did.<sup>238</sup> Jasper Heywood, Donne's uncle, was banished to the Tower in 1584 where he was tortured because of his Jesuit leadership in England. In 1584-85 he was forced to flee to France. Perhaps Donne accompanied his uncle into exile: Dennis Flynn argues that Donne, unable to return to Oxford after Michaelmas 1584 because he would have been forced to take the Oath of Supremacy, left with Heywood and later traveled the continent with William Stanley.<sup>239</sup> Donne saw the potential fate for papal supporters yet again in his brother Henry's 1593 death in prison for harboring a Catholic priest. With Catholic ancestors who died in exile, living relatives forced to remain abroad, relatives in-and-out of prison for their beliefs, and fears for his own safety and advancement if he remained faithful to his Catholic roots, Donne was well acquainted with many forms of exile. He calls attention to Psalm 137 in particular in a sermon celebrating James for forcing fewer men to abandon England to Rome than in past times and for allowing former exiles to return to England.<sup>240</sup> Of course, sermons were public presentations, which allowed little room to remonstrate monarchs. Safety and survival for Donne's family would have required silence regarding Catholic devotion, especially early in his career, mirroring the situation in Psalm 137—the inability (and absence of

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<sup>238</sup> John Heywood did travel abroad during Elizabeth I's reign. For a thorough discussion of Donne's Catholic ancestors and connections, see Dennis Flynn, *John Donne and the Ancient Catholic Nobility* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

<sup>239</sup> Ibid. Flynn suggests that Donne wrote his Latin epigrams while he was in the camp of the Prince of Parma in Antwerp.

<sup>240</sup> Donne, *Sermons*, vol. 1, 220. According to Potter and Simpson, in this sermon Donne celebrates James's greatness, especially his ability to favor men who are honest and good: "All his Actions, all that he did, shew'd him fit for this Crown, and yet he would do nothing to anticipate that Crown" (219). Donne also praises James for not being unduly swayed by extremists: "The *Papists* could not make him place any hopes upon them, nor the *Puritans* make him entertain any fears from them; but his God and our God, as he brought him *via lactea*, by the sweet way of Peace, that flows with milk and hony, so he brought him *via Regia*, by the direct and plain way, without any deviation or descent into ignoble flatteries, or servile humoring of any persons or factions" (219). Donne admires James's courage in not being frightened by the "infamous *powder treason*" (219). For these reasons Donne says, "And therefore let our tongue cleave unto the roof [of] our mouths, if we do not confess his loving kindness before the Lord, and his wonderful works before the Sons of men" (219).

desire) for the oppressed devout openly to sing God's praises.<sup>241</sup> Any further consideration of the career stage in which Donne wrote "Psalm 137" pushes us toward the critical question of when the poem was composed.

### ***Dating "Psalm 137"***

Any work we place into an author's canon brings with it some degree of urgency about knowing its date of composition in order to add to our understanding of the verse. Of course, as John T. Shawcross reminds us, when it comes to Donne's poetry, "Dating is and must be very tentative."<sup>242</sup> An attempt to ascertain the original composition date of a Donne poem often yields little more than informed speculation. Assuming that Craig Monson's persuasive argument that British Library MS Add. 29427 can be dated 1613-1616 is correct (see note 207), we can assert with confidence that the poem was composed no later than 1616. Outside of this knowledge, dating "Psalm 137" proves no simpler than dating "Lamentations." Though the original date of composition for "Psalm 137" cannot be determined with certainty, particular possibilities seem more plausible than others.

Considering the poem's date in relation to composition of "Lamentations" offers one avenue for study, for Donne probably attempted his psalm translation prior to composing "Lamentations," an arguably superior effort to versify the same historical moment. Yet, suggested composition dates for "Lamentations" span much of Donne's career. John Klauser, for example, claims that an original draft of the poem was written in

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<sup>241</sup> Hamlin points out that Izaak Walton also associates Psalm 137 with Donne, for Walton "compared John Donne's retirement after the death of his wife to the mourning exile of the Israelites 'by the rivers of Babylon, when they remembered Sion'" (*Psalm Culture and Early Modern Literature*, 251).

<sup>242</sup> Shawcross, ed., *The Complete Poetry of John Donne* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1967), xxiv.

the late 1580s or 1590s, possibly during Donne's continental expeditions—when Catholic exile would have been in the forefront of Donne's mind.<sup>243</sup> However, Klause calls attention to the inherent difficulties in writing such a long poem while sailing. On the other hand, composing "Psalm 137," a much shorter poem about an identical experience, would have proven more feasible during Donne's military travels. Composition circa battle could explain the poem's graphic violence, which even exceeds its brutal scriptural source, in the repetition of "sack, kill, burne" (line 46) and particularly in its final stanza:

Happy who thy tender Barnes  
from y<sup>e</sup> armes  
of their waylinge mothers tearinge,  
Gainst the walls dashe y<sup>eir</sup> bones,  
ruthless stones  
w<sup>th</sup> their braynes, & blood besmearinge. (lines 61-66)

This fierce language, which vividly recalls combat, could reflect yet another of Donne's poetic responses to the 1596 English pillage of Cádiz. Like Jerusalem, Cádiz was "sacked" and "burned." Donne, potentially more sympathetic to Spanish Catholics than many of his fellow soldiers, could have recalled images of conquest while composing "Psalm 137," a possibility made stronger when one considers a statue now known as Our Lady Vulnerata. In celebration of their victory, English soldiers desecrated a statue of the Madonna and Child—literally "tearinge" the infant Christ "from y<sup>e</sup> armes" of his mother such that Mary's hands and portions of her arms were broken off with the baby—and paraded the statue's remains through the streets of Cádiz, as Donne likely witnessed.

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<sup>243</sup> Klause, "The Two Occasions of Donne's 'Lamentations of Jeremy.'"

Our Lady Vulnerata is preserved in Valladolid, Spain, but the child's remains are not extant. Whether or not the soldiers, rejecting the statue as Catholic iconography, chose to "dashe" the Christ "Gainst the walls," we do not know.<sup>244</sup>

Consideration of Donne's "The Lier" causes 1596 composition to appear more likely since Donne connects "Nabuchadnezzar," source of the Jewish banishment in "Psalm 137," to Spain: "Like Nabuchadnezzar perchance with grass and flowres, / A sallet worse then Spanish dyeting" (lines 3-4). This knowledge of Spanish cuisine has caused some critics, including Grierson, to suggest that Donne composed "The Lier" after his adventure in Cádiz. Such a date also might enhance our understanding of the poem's first line: "By Euphrates flowry side." While, again, we would not want to make too much of verbal parallels, especially variations of a simple word like "flower," bank-side flowers are not mentioned in any of the major Biblical versions of Psalm 137.1.<sup>245</sup> Yet, this river has a "flowry" side, perhaps thanks to proximity of composition to the "grass and flowres" of "The Lier."

Another argument regarding composition (or revision of an early poetic draft, as Klausen suggests for "Lamentations") could be made based on Donne's need for patronage. As we know, Donne's clandestine marriage to Anne More in 1601 resulted in imprisonment and release from his position with Egerton. Patronage accounted for a significant source of income for Donne and his quickly expanding family. Occasionally,

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<sup>244</sup> Soon after the sack of the city, the statue's remains were moved to Madrid, where the countess of Santa Gadea kept the statue in her chapel. In 1600, it was moved to the English Jesuit seminary in Valladolid upon request of the students and staff as a gesture of atonement for their compatriots' actions. The incomplete statue still is preserved in the chapel; the only hints of the infant Christ are portions of his feet on Mary's knee.

<sup>245</sup> Flowers by the river are not mentioned in the Douay-Rheims, Coverdale, Geneva, Bishops, or Authorized versions of Psalm 137, so their appearance in this poem cannot be explained by a poet's duplication of language from other prominent Biblical translations into English. They also are absent from the verse translation of Psalm 137 found in *The whole booke of Psalmes*.

Donne's poems accompanied letters to potential benefactors, and his religious poems served as prime examples of religious devotion and poetic skill, especially to patrons like the countess of Bedford, who adored religious verse. During the early seventeenth century the countess was an admirer of religious poems, as well as a poet herself, though she renounced such pursuits in later years thanks to the encouragement of a Puritan minister. Interestingly, an extant letter dated December 19, 1600 reveals that Sir John Harington sent the countess his epigrams and three Sidney verse psalms—including 137.<sup>246</sup> Whether or not Donne's familiarity with the Sidney psalms draws upon Bedford's manuscript copies, we cannot be certain. R. C. Bald suggests that, in response to the countess's "admiration" of Donne's satires, Donne informed Bedford that her "influence and example had caused him to renounce satire for religious verse."<sup>247</sup> She was one of many potential patrons, patrons Donne eagerly sought, who would have appreciated versified scripture. Though 1596 seems more likely, Donne and the countess's period of acquaintance and patronage, particularly 1608-1612, also proves a prospective time for composition or revision of "Psalm 137."

Rarely does material evidence allow for definitive assertions about the dating of poems. Though one could suggest other possibilities for "Psalm 137," the dating scenarios offered take the poem's language, subject, and relationship to other verse into account. Perhaps further critical attention to this little-studied poem will supplement our information.

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<sup>246</sup> The letter appears in volume 43 of Inner Temple MS 538, a composite manuscript of 480 folios. The other verse psalms included are 51 and 104.

<sup>247</sup> R. C. Bald, *John Donne: A Life* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 174. According to Bald, although Donne knew that the countess admired his satires, he recognized the potentially shaky ground; in a 1609 letter to Goodyer, Donne recalls, "That that knowledge which she hath of me, was in the beginning of a graver course, then of a Poet, into which (that I may also keep my dignity) I would not seem to relapse" (*Letters to Severall Persons of Honour [1651]*, 4).

### *Form and Style of “Psalm 137”*

Finally, we return to the poem’s style and metrical form, apparently Grierson’s primary reasons for excluding “Psalm 137” from Donne’s canon. Regarding verse form, one might argue that Donne composed no other known poems with this particular stanzaic form and rhyme scheme. But multiple Donne songs and sonnets comprise sole examples of a particular metrical form. Donne’s “The Message,” “Song,” and “Loves Usury,” among many others, contain unusual verse forms employed by Donne only once. The fact that we cannot find another Donne poem reflecting the metrical form of “Psalm 137”—a form that, thanks to the Sidney psalter, we know that Donne likely encountered—could simply mean that this poem depicts Donne’s only attempt. One could conjecture that Donne was disappointed in his endeavor and chose not to repeat the form or even to versify another psalm, instead turning to another scriptural book about the same subject and theme.

In terms of style, not every reader believes that “Psalm 137” differs from Donne’s other poems. Rohr-Sauer actually asserts that the poem “is precisely what we might expect of Donne’s witty mind.”<sup>248</sup> In spite of its “freshness and verve,”<sup>249</sup> other readers have questioned the poem’s style, but “Psalm 137” is not alone in seeming unusual: “Lamentations” also differs significantly from Donne’s other poems. Novarr remarks that the language and style of “Lamentations” are atypical of Donne, for the poem contains much “internal rhyme,” “parallel expression with word repetition,” and “overwhelming emphasis on consonance and assonance,” as well as “blatant, powerful, and extensive” effects—such as drawn out “s” sounds and thudding “d” sounds—that

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<sup>248</sup> Rohr-Sauer, “English Metrical Psalms from 1600 to 1660: A Study in the Religious and Aesthetic Tendencies of that Period,” 96.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

give the poem an overall “chiming quality.”<sup>250</sup> According to Klause, Donne “surrenders to his source, forswearing his usual deviousness, drama, and self-conscious wit in the name of a pious, liturgical impersonality,”<sup>251</sup> which suggests that the mood of the poem ill-suits Donne as well. Style of “Lamentations” may seem abnormal for Donne, demonstrating Donne’s potential to vary his poetic approach (or perhaps a modern scholarly distaste for Biblical verse translation, which we must remember “was of immensely greater significance then than now”).<sup>252</sup> However, as previously discussed, elements of “Lamentations” call to mind “Psalm 137.”

In addition to being identified as stylistically surprising, “Lamentations” resembles “Psalm 137” in another way: “Lamentations” has been labeled bad poetry. According to Klause, “Lamentations” always has been ridiculed, deemed far beneath Donne’s other work. It is “seldom read and almost never provokes critical consideration. The poem may seem to join its source, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, in making grief tedious.”<sup>253</sup> Certainly “How sits this citie, late most populous, / Thus solitary, ’and like a widdow thus!” (lines 1-2) inspires little admiration, but, as Klause points out, neither does its scriptural source. Donne was not composing; he was translating—a skill he did not practice often and one that proved challenging for other skillful poets as well. For example, many scholars are convinced that Philip Sidney’s metrical psalms (generally considered “inferior to his best work”) must represent early compositions, though Steven W. May suggests, “their faults are probably rooted in causes other than artistic

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<sup>250</sup> Novarr, *The Disinterred Muse: Donne’s Texts and Contexts*, 148-50.

<sup>251</sup> Klause, “The Two Occasions of Donne’s ‘Lamentations of Jeremy,’” 337.

<sup>252</sup> Roebuck, “Donne’s *Lamentations of Jeremy* Reconsidered,” 37. According to Roebuck, “Verse paraphrase and translation of Scripture ranks as something less-than-poetry in modern perception—a startling reversal of the judgment of earlier times—and nuances of theology appeal to few other than specialized scholarly interests” (37).

<sup>253</sup> Klause, “The Two Occasions of Donne’s ‘Lamentations of Jeremy,’” 337.



immaturity”: “his muse was torn between his allegiance to Scripture and the demands of poetic form.”<sup>254</sup> Perhaps Donne’s attempt in “Lamentations” to versify while translating demonstrates that his talents (like Sidney’s) lay elsewhere, but Donne’s authorship of “Lamentations” is not questioned. The style of “Lamentations” does not constitute sufficient grounds for arguing against Donne’s authorship, nor should it for “Psalm 137.”

Though “Psalm 137” might appear stylistically dissimilar to other Donne poems upon first reading, “sacked, burned, & enthrald”—later repeated in “sack, burne, kill”—echoes not only “Pursuest us, kill’st us, coverest us” in “Lamentations” (line 239) but “breake, blowe, burn” in Donne’s holy sonnet “Batter my heart” (line 4). In addition, the speaker’s “nimble ioynts,” which “become / stiff & num, / To touch warblinge harpe vnable” (lines 34-36), bring to mind “The nimblest crocheting Musitian” of “Elegie: Jealousie” (line 6). Though the dissonant sounds present in “sacked, burned, & enthrald” jar the audience, the cadence simultaneously recalls the nature of the psalm as song. Other incidents of alliteration and repetition of language and sound serve a similar purpose. The simple echo in “vntun’d, vnstrunge” creates a vivid image of useless harps, while suggesting the breakdown of the Jewish state, the “un”-doing of God’s people through “un”-creating their home and their means to praise their Maker. The vibrant “singinge skill” of their tongues is silenced, for their tongues are “glewed” to the roofs of their mouths both by force of the oppressors and by choice of the oppressed, who refuse

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<sup>254</sup> May, *The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts*, 203-4. May calls Sidney’s psalms “only competent in execution,” in part because Sidney’s act was “encumbered by his respect for the original text, as signaled by his enumeration of the corresponding biblical verse numbers in the left margins of his translation” (205, 204).

completely to forfeit their dignity. As the commendations of “Davison’s” poem demonstrate, many readers admire “Psalm 137.”

### *Conclusions*

Manuscript and print evidence point to Donne—not Davison—as author of “Psalm 137.” The case of this verse translation reminds us that seventeenth-century verse canons are not permanently fixed. In our efforts to better understand Renaissance attitudes toward authors and their canons and (when possible) to attribute contemporary poems, we must consistently fight our natural desires to banish or exalt certain texts due to evidence of style alone, for judgments can be swayed by contemporary critical biases and constructed to substantiate multiple scenarios. Instead, we must search for tangible evidence that allows us to trace literary histories; such material proof should serve as the foundation for authorial attribution. We unquestionably will profit from revisiting Renaissance works attributed prior to the recovery and cataloguing of numerous extant manuscript collections and from studying these works within their manuscript contexts. We must remain open to possibilities, for, as Vickers reminds us, “authorship studies, like all forms of research, is best performed with an open mind and a constant readiness to reconsider the evidence for and against an attribution.”<sup>255</sup> Prior to our study, we certainly could not anticipate the importance of the reliable scribe who arranged Donne’s poems in the Skipwith collection or of the accompanying signature in the Edward Smyth manuscript. In the case of “Psalm 137,” analysis of manuscript contexts contributes significantly to the appropriate attribution of this metrical psalm and to our knowledge of Donne, translator of Biblical verses.

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<sup>255</sup> Vickers, *Counterfeiting Shakespeare*, xix.

## Chapter 4

### Southampton, Donne, and (Mis)Attribution in British Library

#### Manuscript Stowe 962

In lines as familiar to many modern readers as “Mark but this flea” or “Kinde pittie chokes my spleene,” “Loves Warre” commences, “Till I have peace with thee, warr other men, / And when I have peace, can I leave thee then?” Yet, “Loves Warre” never appeared in a seventeenth-century printed collection of Donne’s verse. In fact, the complete poem was not printed until the nineteenth century.<sup>256</sup> Like “The Lier,” “Show me deare Christ, thy spouse,” and “H: W: in Hiber: belligeranti,” among other verses, “Loves Warre” was folded into Donne’s canon thanks to ascriptions in authorized manuscripts.

Yet, with few Renaissance manuscripts and printed collections demonstrating *authorial* intervention, what qualifies a manuscript as *authorized*? Ascriptions in the Westmoreland manuscript (inscribed by Donne’s longtime friend Rowland Woodward) merit consideration, but most scribes of manuscript texts remain anonymous,

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<sup>256</sup> Francis Godolphin Waldron first printed the complete poem in *The Shakespearean Miscellany* (London: Knight and Compton, 1802). Robert Chamberlain printed some lines from the poem in *The Harmony of the Muses* (London: Printed by T. W. for William Gilbertson, 1654) (Wing C105), 6-7. And John Cotgrave printed lines from the final section of the poem, beginning “Here let me war, in these arms let me lie,” in *Wits interpreter, the English Parnassus* (London: N. Brooke, 1655) (Wing C6370), 88. For more on Donne’s uncollected printed poems, see Ernest W. Sullivan, II, *The Influence of John Donne: His Uncollected Seventeenth-Century Printed Verse* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993). Although other elegies (such as “Loves Progress” and “Going to Bed”) were excluded from the 1633 *Poems* as well, they were included in subsequent printed collections of Donne’s verse. E. K. Chambers included “Loves Warre” among Donne’s “Doubtful Poems” (*The Poems of John Donne*, 2 vols. [London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1896]), and Herbert J. C. Grierson fully incorporated the verse into Donne’s canon (*The Poems of John Donne*, 2 vols. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912]).

exemplifying what Peter Beal dubs one of the “great paradoxes of manuscript culture.”<sup>257</sup> Thus, editors tend to afford countless manuscript attributions little or no weight—some rightfully so, for certain collectors assigned verses to prominent courtiers and renowned poets without clear justification, except perhaps “celebrity value.”<sup>258</sup> Considering the countless miscellanies of vague provenance filled with verse given debatable ascriptions (if ascribed at all), one might argue that, when editing early modern poetry, taking most seventeenth-century ascriptions into account exacerbates uncertainty. Some might even call such a procedure dangerous; according to Herbert Grierson, “experience has shown that nothing is more unsafe than to trust to the ascriptions of individual, unauthenticated manuscripts.”<sup>259</sup>

Certain manuscript attributions, on the other hand, seem far from haphazard. As discussed in the previous chapter, many ascriptions reflect significant knowledge of Renaissance poets and their authorial canons. In fact, based on study of Thomas Carew’s manuscript poetry, Scott Nixon concludes, “the ascriptions in verse miscellanies of the 1620s and 1630s have a rate of accuracy as high as ninety-five percent.”<sup>260</sup> Recognition

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<sup>257</sup> Peter Beal, *In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and their Makers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 14. Woodward prepared the manuscript for Francis Fane, first earl of Westmorland. Similarly, poems in the Burley manuscript prove particularly important because William Parkhurst, one of its scribes, was secretary to Sir Henry Wotton.

<sup>258</sup> This controversial topic lacks scholarly consensus. H. R. Woudhuysen suggests that “celebrity status” usually proved less significant than we might think. He offers Sir Philip Sidney’s works as exceptional: “they were eagerly sought after, not just because they were good, not just because of the reader’s knowledge of Sidney’s life and death, but because they were identifiable as his, as by a famous author. In this respect he is unrepresentative when compared with the writers of the next generation” (*Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640* [Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996], 9). He argues, “it may matter to modern readers and editors whether a poem is or is not by Donne or Jonson, but their contemporaries appeared to care little” (9). Yet, Woudhuysen also notes that having famous authors’ or prominent figures’ work in a miscellany generally was desired (160), acknowledging the many complexities surrounding this issue.

<sup>259</sup> Grierson, ed., *The Poems of John Donne*, vol. 1, vi.

<sup>260</sup> Scott Nixon, “A Reading of Thomas Carew in Manuscript” (PhD diss., St. John’s College, Oxford, 1996), 2. Based on comparison of Carew’s canon as represented in the 1640 collection of his poems with Carew’s canon as reflected in Renaissance manuscripts, Nixon argues that manuscript evidence generally is more dependable than evidence based upon posthumous printed editions (55). Yet, Nixon cautiously states,

of the potential value in studying these ascribed verses raises two major concerns: 1) no criteria exist for segregating manuscript collections into “authenticated” and “unauthenticated” artifacts; and 2) even if such categorization were possible, we would suffer from ignoring attributions in “unauthenticated” manuscripts, for “Ascriptions, or rather misascriptions, can be very revealing, for they show who the scribe expected to be the author of a poem, possibly because of the source whence he obtained his copy-manuscript.”<sup>261</sup> Misattributions as well as attributions may contain potentially valuable insights into Renaissance verse, its writers, its collectors, and its readers.

When studying a poet whose modern canon was built primarily on an early modern printed collection, we should at least consider all ascriptions, though editors must weigh attribution evidence carefully. We cannot, for example, assert authorship based solely on the quantity of attributions, which might (as Dr. Johnson would say) agree in error.<sup>262</sup> Even internal evidence favoring a particular poet can sometimes prove misleading, in part because “Elizabethan poets drew upon a broad, common range of motifs, rhetorical devices, allusions, and adages.”<sup>263</sup> Commonalities abound among Renaissance poems, making mistakes by manuscript compilers and scribes as understandable as mistakes by modern editors attempting to sift through complex evidence.

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“rather than accepting either manuscript or print ascriptions as authoritative, all evidence should be viewed as relative and weighed in the balance when determining canon” (56-57).

<sup>261</sup> Mary Hobbs, *Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1992), 139.

<sup>262</sup> Charles B. Gullans observes, “If we were to settle the problems of authorship merely on the quantity of manuscript ascriptions to a given author, we should have to reassign half the poems of the early seventeenth century, and frequently in the face of superior evidence” (“Raleigh and Ayton: The Disputed Authorship of ‘Wrong Not Sweete Empress of My Heart,’” *Studies in Bibliography* 13 [1960]: 196).

<sup>263</sup> Steven W. May, *The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991), 11-12.

Scholars would benefit from a methodical approach to determining the quality of ascriptions in individual manuscripts. This chapter offers one method: investigation of certain facets of manuscript verse collections that appear to have been carefully prepared—in this case British Library MS Stowe 962—in order to bring a range of possible evidence to bear on complex questions of attribution. Systematic examination of individual manuscripts (in the fashion outlined in Chapter One and exemplified in Chapters Two and Three) leads to unpredictable but potentially valuable discoveries. MS Stowe 962, for example, contains significant insights concerning attribution and authorship. This understudied miscellany, which abounds in Donne’s poetry and short prose, contributes evidence regarding several poems whose authorship is contested. The volume also offers a number of previously unknown poems, including an important and informative verse epistle to Queen Elizabeth I attributed to Henry Wriothesley, earl of Southampton—a man well known for many reasons, such as his literary connections and his leadership in the uprising of the earl of Essex.

This chapter consists of two parts. Part I considers numerous material features of MS Stowe 962. Awareness of quality and perhaps purpose informs evaluation of its intriguing attributions, many to Donne, whose canon is complicated by the abundance of verse misattributed to him—more than any other Renaissance poet.<sup>264</sup> Manuscript analysis in Part I allows for an informed discussion in Part II of “The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned. to *Queen Elizabeth*” within its only known manuscript context. If correctly attributed, this poetic plea for the queen to pardon Southampton’s participation in the 1601 uprising contributes not only a poem but a poet

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<sup>264</sup> For more on Donne and manuscript verse misattribution, see Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1995), especially 158-59.

to Renaissance studies. Previous chapters of the present study have aimed to demonstrate how close engagement with Donne's poems within their manuscript contexts enhances our interpretations of his verse and our knowledge of their contemporary readers. This chapter investigates how manuscript contextual analysis of one poet's lyrics can lead to significant insights regarding other early modern authors, their verse, and its readers.<sup>265</sup>

## **Part I: Attributed Poems in British Library Manuscript Stowe 962**

MS Stowe 962 is a quarto miscellany containing 254 folios, prepared mainly in the 1620s and 1630s.<sup>266</sup> Primarily a collection of poems from the time of James I and Charles I, the volume also contains prose works, such as speeches and letters, as well as Elizabethan verse. At least three hands appear in the manuscript, which offers works originally composed by Donne, Carew, Jonson, and many other poets, though most

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<sup>265</sup> Though "authorship" apparently lacked substantial importance prior to the sixteenth century, recognizing a work's author became increasingly valuable, it seems, in the late sixteenth and (particularly) the early seventeenth centuries. Marotti notes a rise in the frequency of manuscript attributions, demonstrating that "many collectors took pains to identify the poets whose work they transcribed," and connects this phenomenon to a corresponding print movement (*Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*, 329). Professional writers and publishers celebrated individual (and potentially lucrative) creations in print, from Jonson's *Workes* to the first posthumous collection of Donne's *Poems*, resulting from and contributing to mounting "author" significance. The 1620s and 1630s tendered many miscellanies reflecting "author" interest, especially in admired poets like Donne. Yet, in a society in which "a large part of education was devoted to the practice of imitation, both of manner and of matter," Woudhuysen asserts, "the very concept of individual authorship in the Renaissance was a relative one" (*Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640*, 162). The level of contemporary, popular knowledge regarding authorial canons remains highly ambiguous. For more on seventeenth-century authorship and manuscript attribution, see Beal's analyses of prominent authors such as Donne and Jonson in various entries in *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* (London: Mansell; New York: Bowker, 1980); Hobbs, *Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts*; Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); and Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*.

<sup>266</sup> The latest dated poem is "Vppon the most Religious death of the generouse & truly noble Io: Pulteney who died 15: May: A<sup>o</sup>: 1637" (fol. 34v); the manuscript probably was completed near this time. It must be noted, though, that manuscript dating remains an inexact science.

poems lack ascriptions.<sup>267</sup> The composite manuscript, which seems to contain four distinct stocks of papers, consists of two primary sections: 1) folios 1-37, containing Donne's prose paradoxes and problems, characters composed by Donne and by John Earle, and a first-line index, followed by a few additional poems and prose works by other authors; and 2) folios 38-254, primarily consisting of poems, many in the form of song lyrics, and a detailed first-line index for nearly the entire manuscript prepared in several hands (fols. 244-54).<sup>268</sup> The manuscript contains folio numbers, the second section paginated separately such that folio 38 is labeled folio "1," which indicates that the second section was paginated before being bound with the first.

Though little can be claimed about the manuscript's provenance with certainty, some elements are known while others can be surmised. The Stowe collection once belonged to the first marquess of Buckingham (1753-1813), who acquired many manuscripts from the antiquary Thomas Astle (1735-1803). Though Astle bought some manuscripts through the London salerooms, he inherited others from his father-in-law, Philip Morant (1700-1770), an Essex historian. Beal suggests that Morant might have owned MSS Stowe 962 and Stowe 961, an early seventeenth-century collection of Donne's verse.<sup>269</sup> Because many poems in MS Stowe 962 are attributed to Oxford

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<sup>267</sup> The scripts in various sections of the manuscripts contain minor differences, but some dissimilarities could result from preparation at different times or with different utensils. The script appearing in folios 40r-65v is not found elsewhere in the manuscript, nor is the script in folios 235v-237v.

<sup>268</sup> The papers measure approximately 144 x 187mm. Although watermarks and chain lines are faint and difficult to discern, the manuscript contains at least four paper stocks. The first seems to constitute folios 1-36, 148-63, and 190-254; the second, folios 37-63 and 76-79; the third, folios 64-75 and 80-84; and the fourth, folios 85-147 and 164-89. One folio is missing between the two main sections. Some pages have been cut in order to standardize the leaf size, as the missing tops of the letters in "where faultes" reveal (fol. 47r).

<sup>269</sup> MS Stowe 961 is an extensive collection of poems mainly by Donne, though some verses were composed by other poets. A single scribe prepared the entire collection and its attractive and accurate "TABLE" (fol. 112v), a first-line index similar to that of MS Stowe 962 except that each alphabetical letter is afforded only a portion of a page (fols. 112v-114r). Probably because the manuscript contains only poems by (or supposedly by) Donne, no attributions appear, though one or two letters (presumably the



authors, Arnold Hunt believes that the compiler was probably, though not certainly, an Oxford man.<sup>270</sup> Mary Hobbs agrees, suggesting that MS Stowe 962, “One of the most interesting literary manuscripts containing song lyrics,” emanates from Christ Church, Oxford.<sup>271</sup>

Apparently, the manuscript’s compiler took great care in cataloguing its contents. Though the prose paradoxes, problems, and characters contain their own index, the remaining poems in the first section are catalogued in the carefully prepared concluding first-line index, which devotes a full page to nearly every letter of the alphabet. The scribe initially catalogued the second, larger manuscript section, adding each poem’s first-line to its appropriate index page, though in no apparent order; later, after combining the two manuscript sections, a scribe contributed the first-lines of poems contained in the manuscript’s initial section. The scribe avoids confusion by adding “a” to folio numbers for first-section poems. The manuscript’s index demonstrates substantial attention to detail, even noting repeated versions of poems such as “ffor godes sake hold yo<sup>r</sup> peace & lett me loue,” listed as “54. & 151” (fol. 246v).

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scribe’s initials) appear after some poems. The scribe often adds “A P” or “P,” though sometimes “Finis” (on fol. 47v, for example), but sometimes the initials are reversed to “P A” (see fol. 62r). The form of the initial(s) changes slightly in folio 86v and subsequent folios.

<sup>270</sup> I am grateful for the kind assistance of Arnold Hunt, British Library Curator of Historical Manuscripts, regarding provenance of MS Stowe 962.

<sup>271</sup> Hobbs, *Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts*, 94. According to Beal, “one of the main centres for the production of verse miscellanies appears to have been Christ Church, Oxford (college of such literary figures as Richard Corbett, William Strode, George Morley, Henry King, and King’s amanuensis Thomas Manne). A number of the miscellanies which can be associated in some way with Christ Church prove to be textually interrelated” (*Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, part 1, 248). Hobbs explores King’s verse in this “Oxford tradition,” connecting the latter part of MS Stowe 962 with a group of manuscripts: Bodleian MSS Ashmole 38; Eng. poet. c. 50, e. 14, and e. 97; Rawl. poet. 199; Corpus Christi College MSS 325 and 328; British Library MSS Add. 15227 and 30982; Egerton 923; Sloane 1446 and 542; Folger MSS V. a. 97 and V. a. 170 (*Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts*, 95, footnote 3; also see 87-90). Hobbs notes that some verses’ titles betray musical origin by old-fashioned terms like “Dumpe” or “Dialogue” (94).

MS Stowe 962 reveals attention to other details, particularly in its marginal comments. Scribes accurately record connections between poems. They note, for example, the inclusion of answer poems for verses located elsewhere in the manuscript and add marginalia, such as “with the Calme fol: 121” (fol. 56v), which recalls the connection between Donne’s “The Storme” and “The Calme.” Numerous verse revisions and additions also appear; even a well-drawn, traditional manicule indicates where missing lines, added in the margin, should have appeared within an original poem (fol. 131r). Similarly, folio 234r offers additional stanzas for an incomplete poem on folio 203v and provides an explanatory comment. Such precise marginal directions complicate determination of the appropriate scribal publication category, as established by Harold Love, for MS Stowe 962: “entrepreneurial publication” or “user publication.”<sup>272</sup> Or perhaps the elevated sense of organization and precision suggests that the compiler intended to distribute copies of the collection, via scribal publication or print.<sup>273</sup>

The scrupulously prepared indices and substantial marginalia, attesting to the care of the compiler and scribes in preparing the manuscript, are matched by its generally sound poetic texts, including verses by Donne. The manuscript contains ninety-one Donne poems (two with a second copy), many unattributed, as well as ten prose

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<sup>272</sup> Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England*, 47. Love categorizes the three primary types of manuscripts as “the authorial holograph, the copy made by a specialist scribe, and the copy made by an individual who wished to possess the text” (46) and sets forth the categories of scribal publication: “author publication, entrepreneurial publication and user publication” (47). He notes the complexity in determining the appropriate category for some manuscripts, particularly regarding user publication due to the fluidity of practices by users and the fact that “individuals who assembled large numbers of scribally published documents were also likely to be active transmitters of texts” (79-80).

<sup>273</sup> This possible plan is implied in notes such as “This to be sett before. When by thy scorne O murdresse I am deade. in pag. 90.” (fol. 210v) and “To be placed after (Take heed of loueing me in pag. 128.” (fol. 212r). Terms like “sett” and “placed after” suggest that the compiler and/or scribes expect the volume to serve as a copy-text, although such remarks could supply mere guidelines to the manuscript’s readers.

paradoxes, nineteen problems, and two characters by Donne.<sup>274</sup> Though the Donne poems in MS Stowe 962 appear in no apparent sequence and were added at diverse points, they regularly offer solid texts. Helen Gardner suggests that the scribe might have been “either following copy that had been corrected from print or else taking extra poems from one of the [early printed] editions.”<sup>275</sup> She bases this argument on the manuscript’s inconsistent “group” readings, for often MS Stowe 962 reads with Group III texts, but in many poems it reads with Group I or Group II, meaning that the poems sometimes parallel the 1633 or 1635 printed texts.<sup>276</sup> Gardner’s assertion, which seems grounded in the texts’ general excellence, implies that manuscripts maintain little value unless their Donne texts fall into a single “group,” a twentieth-century convention that has proven useful but potentially inadequate. Gardner’s evaluation seems incongruent with the many poetic texts in manuscript miscellanies that represent differing traditions and varying levels of quality. Collectors solicited poems from diverse sources; for example, a collector might gather a few poems directly from their author and later add poems—even verses by that same author—from a friend attempting to recreate from memory poems heard months or even years before, creating a mixed-quality collection. The fact that a manuscript reflects various “group” traditions does *not* necessarily correspond to poor-quality verse. Nor does it reflect scribal copying from printed sources, an activity more likely to reproduce texts from a single printed edition than multiple editions.

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<sup>274</sup> See Beal, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, part 1, 255.

<sup>275</sup> Helen Gardner says that MS Stowe 962 is similar to the Stephens manuscript, which stands “far from Donne’s papers shown to his friends” and seems to contain copies of “poems picked up at various times which [the collector] has roughly sorted and brought together” (*John Donne: The Elegies and the Songs and Sonnets* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965], lxxxix). However, MS Stowe 962’s texts and general construction prove far more reliable than previously thought.

<sup>276</sup> See the discussion of textual “groups” in Chapter One.

Most if not all texts of Donne poems in MS Stowe 962 were not copied from printed editions, for many versions follow textual traditions found only in manuscripts. A number of the collection's copies maintain similar readings to those of Houghton MS Eng. 966.4, known as the Dobell manuscript. The poem normally entitled "Loves diet," correctly attributed to Donne in MS Stowe 962 (fol. 87v), for example, contains both the title "Amoris Dieta" and the unique textual variants found in the Dobell manuscript but not in seventeenth-century printed editions.<sup>277</sup> Many unattributed Donne poems follow manuscript traditions as well: "The Good Morrow" (fols. 157v-158r) reads "childish pleasures seelily" for "country pleasures childishly" (line 3) and "slumbred" for "snorted" (line 4), readings found only in manuscripts such as the Dobell manuscript and Houghton MS Eng. 966.5, known as the O'Flahertie manuscript. Copies of Donne's satires also follow many readings only found in manuscripts, such as "dangers" for "dungeons" (line 20), "Souldier" for "Sentinell" (line 31), and "ragged" for "Cragged" (line 80) in "Satire III." Thus, Stowe 962's inclusion of "Satire VI" and "Satire VII," poems Grierson excluded from Donne's canon, does not reflect the later seventeenth-century printed collections' addition of the satires to Donne's sequence; the satires comprise an early manuscript sequence, although only the first satire is attributed specifically to Donne.<sup>278</sup> Admittedly, some poetic variants suggest scribal alterations, as

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<sup>277</sup> Similarly, MS Stowe 962's "A songe" (fols. 65r-v), which begins "Goe & catch a fallinge starr," offers readings (such as "should" for "might" [line 22]) that are found in the Dobell manuscript tradition but not in printed editions, and "Niobe" (fol. 131v) reads "made mine owne tombe," following the manuscript tradition seen in the O'Flahertie and Westmoreland manuscripts.

<sup>278</sup> Only the first satire (now usually known as "Satire 2") is attributed to Donne. Yet, one might assume that the attribution applies to all of the satires, since the poems contain similar marginal titles ("Satyre 1," "Satyre 2," etc.) that cause them to appear like a unified group. Seven satires comprise this group, the five poems accepted as Donne's and the two additional satires found in some printed editions. Although Chambers included the two satires as Donne's, Grierson reassigned them and other poems to John Roe, prompting Henry M. Belden to remark in his review of Grierson's edition, "If all these poems are Roe's, we have to reckon with a new poet of satiric power second only to that of Jonson and of Donne himself,

in nearly all miscellanies, and some texts prove superior to others. But the generally high quality of the Donne texts adds credence to the care and attention originally afforded MS Stowe 962.

Confidence in the artifact's compilers proves important when considering another feature of MS Stowe 962: ascriptions. The volume only attributes fifty-four works, a small fraction of those included. Like many seventeenth-century miscellanies, its ascriptions consist of full names, surnames, or initials, but, unlike most other manuscripts, each ascription's purpose can be identified with ease. As discussed in Chapter One, names or initials supplied in manuscripts can signal one of multiple intentions in addition to a poem's author, including the scribe, the person who originally supplied the poem, or the verse's subject (particularly in elegies).<sup>279</sup> However, in MS Stowe 962 all ascriptions to recognizable names indicate the poem's author or suspected author. Whenever a name refers to a poem's subject instead of its author, the scribe clarifies the distinction: for example, "Vppon" elucidates that "Vppon the Kinge of Sweden. A<sup>o</sup> 1632:" (fols. 32v-33r) elegizes the king, while "A farewell to the world *per* Sir Kenell Digby. 1635" (fols. 33r-34r) is claimed to be "*per*" (or "*by*") Digby.<sup>280</sup>

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though hitherto so little known that his discoverer has to construct an identifying biography for him" (*Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, xiv [1915]: 138-39). "Satyre 6" (fols. 106r-107r), which begins "Men write that loue & reason disagree," is called "Satire VI" in *Poems* (1635-1654) and "Satire VII" in *Poems* (1669). Grierson also attributes MS Stowe 962's "Satyre.7" (fols. 107r-109r) to Roe, entitling it "To S<sup>r</sup> Nich: Smyth. 1602"; the poem is called "Satire VI" in *Poems* (1669), yet the texts (and the reversed order of the two poems in MS Stowe 962) indicate that they were not copied from the 1669 collection.

<sup>279</sup> See Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640*, 160.

<sup>280</sup> The manuscript contains only one potentially questionable ascription, a poem entitled "On a greate mans fall: L: C: Lo: Tr: 1624" (fol. 146r-v). Although most readers likely would assume that "L: C: Lo: Tr:" refers to the "greate man" and not the poem's author, the title at first appears ambiguous; however, the poem, which concerns an unpopular person whose dubious rise in power was promoted unfairly by the king, reflects some contemporary opinions of "Lionel Cranfield Lord Treasurer" and first earl of Middlesex. Impeached for bribery in 1624, in part (if not primarily) for opposing Buckingham's intended war with Spain after the failed Spanish Match, Cranfield qualifies as the poem's likely target, not its author. Thus, the single attribution that a modern reader might question (though a contemporary reader probably

Recognizing this consistency in ascription practices proves crucial for evaluating poems attributed to little known or unknown authors, verses apparently unique to MS Stowe 962. Like other “Oxford tradition” manuscripts, MS Stowe 962 contains many verses still unpublished, and, as Hobbs asserts regarding anonymous miscellany poems, “While it must be admitted that some are no great loss to literature, even they are still valuable for what they reveal of social and academic history, while many others are considerably more significant from a literary viewpoint.”<sup>281</sup> Although the authors of seemingly unique verses in MS Stowe 962 cannot be verified with certainty, the poems exhibit the compiler’s resourcefulness. Evaluating authors of some MS Stowe 962 poems that do appear in other manuscripts also proves difficult, even impossible, due to longstanding authorial uncertainty, but some of these lyrics are past due for reconsideration. Fortunately, the accuracy of many MS Stowe 962 ascriptions can be assessed, offering evidence regarding the collection’s quality that aids in evaluating debatable cases, such as “The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned. to *Queen Elizabeth*.”

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would not) proves discernible. Other seemingly attributed poems in the collection are less controversial. Certainly, no early modern or modern reader would suppose that the Pope actually composed “The Popes Pater noster,” a satirical Latin rendering of The Lord’s Prayer at the Pope’s expense (fol. 165v). One might wonder about the word “James” (or perhaps “Ianus”) beside the title of the poem “Of women” (fols. 86v-87r), which begins, “The feminine is. counted ill.” However, the word clearly was added after the original copying, probably by a later reader who gives no indication of what this seeming ascription indicates. Only one “*per*” remark clearly does not represent a legitimate ascription. Folio 65r contains two related poems, each consisting of two stanzas of five lines each: one labeled “Woman *per* Eccho” begins, “Come Eccho thee I summon; tell me truly w<sup>ts</sup> a woman”; the other, which constitutes the “Reply,” begins, “But for my fayre M<sup>rs</sup> sake: I this quicke reply did make.” Lacking attribution to a human being, this poem also is excluded from this study.

<sup>281</sup> Hobbs, *Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts*, 3. Hobbs cites George Morley’s elegy for John Pulteney as an example of a single extant manuscript copy with an accurate attribution. She points out that the date offered, May 1637, is “inscribed on his Leicester tomb” (94).

### ***“Right” and “Wrong” Ascriptions in Manuscript Stowe 962***

The vast majority of authorial assertions in MS Stowe 962 prove correct. Of its fifty-four attributions, thirty-six are almost certainly accurate. First in the manuscript are “Paradoxes *per* Iohn Done,” followed by Donne’s prose problems.<sup>282</sup> Although no subsequent reference to Donne appears with his problems, the scribe probably intended the attribution to apply to both prose forms, as indicated by their uniform appearance. MS Stowe 962’s short Donne prose appears collateral with several important collections, including Trinity College, Cambridge, MS R.3.12 (known as the Puckering manuscript), its copy, British Library MS Add. 18647 (called the Denbigh manuscript), and Trinity College, Dublin, MS 877.<sup>283</sup> Sequence and titular language suggest that most texts can

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<sup>282</sup> The paradoxes are written in a legible, though not neat, secretary hand, and the scribe provides folio numbers, catchwords, and textual revisions. On folio 1r the scribe writes, “Paradoxes *per* Iohn Done” and “ffol. I.” (not “Feb. I.” as Helen Peters states in *John Donne Paradoxes and Problems* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980], lxii). The scribe mis-numbers paradoxes 5-8, though another scribe has corrected the numbers; apparently the first scribe confused the paradox numbers and the folio numbers. The body of each paradox begins on the line following its title. The paradoxes included are as follows: “That all thinges kill them selues.” (fol. 1r-v); “That woemen ought to paynt themselues.” (fols. 1v-2v); “That old men are more fantastique then younge.” (fols. 2v-3r); “That Nature is o<sup>r</sup> worst guyde” (fols. 3v-4r); “That only Cowardes dare die” (fols. 4v-5r); “That the guiftes of the boddie are better then the guiftes of the minde or ffortune.” (fols. 5r-6v); “That a wise man is knowne by much laughinge.” (fols. 6v-7v); “That good is more Common then Euill.” (fols. 7v-8v); “That by discord thinges encrease.” (fols. 8v-9v); and “That it is possible to finde some vertue in some woemen.” (fols. 9v-10v). After the last paradox, the scribe draws a broken line and begins the next section, labeled “Problems.” (fol. 10v). The problems included are as follows: “Why are Courtiers Athiestes sooner then ^men^ of...?” (fol. 10v); “Why sir W: R: writt the historie of times?” (fol. 11r); “Why doe greate men choose of all...?” (fol. 11r); “Why doth not gold soyle the fingers?” (fol. 11r); “Why die non for loue now?” (fol. 11v); “Why doe younge men soe much studdie devinitie?” (fol. 11v); “Why hath the Common opinione afforded women soules?” (fol. 12r); “Why are the fayrest falsest?” (fols. 12v-13r); “Why haue bastardes best fortunes?” (fol. 13r-v); “Why puritans make longest sermons?” (fols. 13v-14r); “Why doth the pop soe much affect to vndermine the nose?” (fol. 14r-v); “Why doe weomen delight soe much in feathers?” (fols. 14v-15r); “Why are stats-men most incredulous?” (fol. 15r-v); “Why Venus starr doth only cast a shaddowe?” (fols. 15v-16v); “Why is Venus starr multi-nominous called both Hesperus & Vesper?” (fols. 16v-17r); “Why are new officers least oppressing?” (fol. 17r-v); “Why is there more varitie of greene then of other ~~exxx~~ coullers...” (fol. 17v); “Why doth Iohn Salisburensis writinge de Nugis Curald, handle the prouidence & omnipotencie of god.” (fol. 18r-v); and “Why did the Diuell reserue Iesuites for these latter times.” (fol. 18v).

<sup>283</sup> According to Peters, the same ten paradoxes appear in the same order in these three manuscripts, the Westmoreland manuscript, and the Burley manuscript (*John Donne Paradoxes and Problems*, lx-lxi). She also points out that, where the Puckering manuscript and Trinity College, Dublin, MS 877 differ, MS Stowe 962 is closer to the Puckering manuscript; she suggests, “Neither manuscript could have been copied from the other,” though the edition offers no support for the claim (lxiii).

be traced to a common source, but two concluding prose problems in MS Stowe 962 (with titles in the form of statements, not questions, as in previous problems) seem to reflect an additional source.<sup>284</sup> Following the problems are Donne's "A descriptione of a Scott at first sight" (fol. 19r) and "A Duncce" (fols. 19v-21r), the latter correctly ascribed to Donne.<sup>285</sup> In addition to the prose works are seven poems accurately attributed to Donne, usually as "I:D:," including "A songe" ("Goe & catch a fallinge starr") and "A storme from the Iland voyage w<sup>th</sup> the Earle of Essex to his freinde."<sup>286</sup> The note "Ben. Iohnson," appearing after the latter's title in a separate script, offers yet another plausible intention behind an ascription: the person thought to be the original recipient of a verse letter.<sup>287</sup>

In addition to lyrics accurately attributed to Donne, the manuscript contains many verses correctly assigned to other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers. The prose piece "Cuffe his speech at the time of his Executione" (fol. 31v) repeats the famous death oration delivered by Henry Cuffe, Essex's secretary, executed for his role in the 1601 uprising. MS Stowe 962 also contains two correctly attributed elegies by Francis

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<sup>284</sup> Though the script in the final problems and the following character is similar to that of the earlier problems, the scripts might be different; the change in ink color suggests at least a different period of writing. Problems 1-17 contain final flourishes, like three curved backslashes (each followed by a period) occupying blank space, but the final problems contain a simple final slash.

<sup>285</sup> Although the only annotated critical edition of the paradoxes and problems relegates the two characters (and four additional short prose works) to dubia (*John Donne Paradoxes and Problems*), manuscript evidence lends weight to Donne's authorship. Currently, I am preparing a study of Donne's accepted and (supposedly) apocryphal short prose works within their manuscript contexts.

<sup>286</sup> The following poems are attributed accurately to Donne: "A storme from the Iland voyage w<sup>th</sup> the Earle of Essex to his freinde" (fols. 55v-56v); "A songe" (fol. 65r-v), which begins "Goe & catch a fallinge starr"; "Amoris Dieta. per I. Dun" (fol. 87r-v), which begins "To what a cumbersome vnwildines"; "Agaynst Poetes and Lawyers. I:D:" (fols. 95r-97r), beginning "Sir though (I thanke god for it) I doe hate"; "A Letter" (fols. 109r-10r), which begins "S<sup>i</sup> more then kisses letters mingle soules"; "A Letanie. per I:D:" (fols. 114r-18v); and an untitled poem (typically known as "A Hymn to God the Father" or "To Christ") (fol. 220r-v), which begins "Wilt thou forgiue the sinne where I begunn."

<sup>287</sup> Although this poem was almost certainly composed for Christopher Brooke, confusion about its recipient appears in other manuscripts as well. According to Beal, the John Cave manuscript labels the recipient as "S<sup>r</sup> Basill Brooke," while other manuscripts are more vague: the Holgate manuscript entitles the poem "D<sup>r</sup>: D: to his freinde of a storme at sea" (*Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, part 1, 485-88).



Beaumont on the countess of Rutland, wife of fellow conspirator Roger Manners, fifth earl of Rutland. Beaumont elegizes the countess—only child of Sir Philip Sidney and step-daughter to Essex—who died in August 1612 in “Vppon the death of the Countesse of Rutland” (fols. 40v-42v) and “Ad Comitissam Rutlandiae” (fols. 88r-89r).<sup>288</sup> These elegies, Cuffe’s speech, and the Southampton poem might suggest the compiler’s special interest in and perhaps knowledge of this historical event and its participants.

Also correctly attributed to Beaumont are “An Ellegie on the death of the fayre and vertuouse La: Penelope, late La: Clyfton” (fols. 137v-139r) and an elegy “On the death of the Lady Markham” (fols. 81r-82v). The former concerns the daughter of Robert Rich, earl of Warwick, and his wife, Penelope Devereux Rich—Essex’s sister. The latter laments the death of Bridget, daughter of Sir James Harrington and wife of Sir Anthony Markham. Some controversy surrounds the Markham elegy, for the concluding portion, beginning “You wormes (my riuals) whiles she was aliue,” sometimes appears in manuscripts as a separate poem with a separate author. Though the complete poem is generally assigned to Beaumont, the elegy exemplifies the uncertainty surrounding most authorial canons of the period.<sup>289</sup>

MS Stowe 962 contains other poems correctly attributed to poets both prominent and obscure. The volume includes the widely circulated “The censure of the Parliament

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<sup>288</sup> The former elegy begins, “I may forget to eate, to ~~leepe~~ drinke, to sleepe”; the latter begins, “Maddan [sic.] soe may my verses pleasinge be.” For more on Beaumont’s non-dramatic poetry, see *The Works of Beaumont & Fletcher*, ed. Rev. Alexander Dyce, vol. 11 (London: Edward Moxon, Dover Street, 1846). Substantial confusion surrounds Beaumont’s verse canon. According to Beal, the former elegy on the countess of Rutland, for example, is attributed to Donne in Bodleian MS Eng. poet. f. 9 (p. 139-43) and Yale Osborn MS b 148 (p. 136-38) (*Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, part 1, 67).

<sup>289</sup> The Markham elegy appears in *Poems from Sir Kenelm Digby’s Papers in the Possession of Henry A. Bright* (London: Nichols and Sons, 1877). Bright remarks that this verse section might constitute a separate poem belonging to Jonson (or maybe to Randolph) tacked on to Beaumont’s initial lines (29). The full poem was printed in *Poems: by Francis Beaumont, Gent* (London: Printed by Richard Hodgkinson, 1640) (STC 1665), sigs. H2v-H3v. It also was attributed to “F.B.” in *Le prince d’amour; or the prince of love. With a collection of several ingenious poems and songs by the wits of the age* (London: Printed for William Leake, 1660) (Wing R2189), sigs. H4v-H5v.

fart,” accurately assigned to “*John Hoskines*.” Other correctly attributed verses composed by Thomas Carew, Richard Corbett, Sir Edward Dyer, Ben Jonson, and Sir Henry Wotton<sup>290</sup> appear alongside poems by the little-known versifiers William Lewis, Dr. Lapworth, Thomas Goodwyn, George Morley, I. Lewis, and George Rodney, most of whom were associated with Oxford University.<sup>291</sup> Compositions by university wits and

<sup>290</sup> For more on “The censure of the Parliament fart” (fols. 66r-69r), see *The Life, Letters, and Writings of John Hoskyns 1566-1638*, ed. Louise Brown Osborn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937). Osborn asserts that the poem was written as a collaboration, for in Jonson’s *Alchemist* Mammon refers “to the authors of these lines” (300). Correctly attributed to Carew are “Ingratefull Loue threatned” (fol. 235r-v); an untitled poem (normally known as “Mediocrity in love rejected”) (fols. 235v-236r), beginning “Giue me more loue or more disdayne”; an untitled poem (usually entitled “To my Rivall”) (fol. 236r-v) that begins “Hence vayne intruder hast away”; an untitled poem (normally called “A Looking-Glasse”) (fols. 236v-237r), beginning “That flatteringe glasse whose smoothe face weaues”; and “Eternitie of Loue protested” (fol. 237r-v) (see *The Poems of Thomas Carew with His Masque Coelum Britannicum*, ed. Rhodes Dunlap [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949]). The verse epistle “D<sup>or</sup> Corbet to the honorable Lo: Mordant” (fols. 72r-75v), beginning “My lord I doe confesse at the first newes,” is attributed correctly to Corbett (see *The Poems of Richard Corbett*, ed. J. A. W. Bennett and H. R. Trevor-Roper [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955]). “A Dumpe by sir E:D:” (fol. 192r-v), which begins “Devide my times and rate my wretched howers,” is attributed accurately to Dyer. By Jonson are the poems “An Epitaph” (fol. 91v), beginning “Wilt thou heare what man can say,” and “An Execratione vpon Vulcan by Ben: Iohnson occasioned by the burninge of ^his^ Deske of writings Sc:” (fols. 238r-242r) (see *Ben Jonson: The Complete Poems*, ed. George Parfitt [New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1982; reprint of 1975]). Attributed to Wotton, probably correctly, is an untitled poem (sometimes known as “A Poem Written by Sir Henry Wotton in his Youth”) (fol. 170r), beginning “O faythlesse world, & thy most faythlesse part.” Though evidence favors Wotton’s authorship, some have attributed the poem to Sir Benjamin Rudyerd; the lyric appeared as his in *Poems written by the Right Honorable William earl of Pembroke lord steward of his Majesties houshold. Whereof many of which are answered by way of repartee, by Sr Benjamin Ruddier, knight* (London: Printed by Matthew Inman, 1660) (Wing P1128), sigs. D1v-D2r. James Alexander Manning suggests that the poem might reflect a collaborative effort by close friends Wotton and Rudyerd or that Rudyerd might have added the verses not found in the version in *A Poetical Rhapsody (Memoirs of Sir Benjamin Rudyerd, Knt.* [London: T. & W. Boone, 1841], Appendix, iv-v).

<sup>291</sup> Although these poems appear infrequently, attributions in manuscript and, in some cases, in print suggest that the poems are assigned accurately in MS Stowe 962. By William Lewis is “An Elegie on the death of the most learned D<sup>r</sup> fenton lecturer of Grayes Inn London” (fols. 42v-44v), beginning “But am I suer hee’s deade? when yet I see,” on English clergyman and author Roger Fenton, chaplain to Donne’s one-time employer Sir Thomas Egerton; Fenton died in January 1615/16. Also by William Lewis is “Vpon the degradinge of Chancello<sup>r</sup> Baron *per* parliament: A<sup>o</sup> 1621” (fols. 52v-55v), which begins “When you awake (dull Brittans) & behold”—a poem on the fall of Sir Francis Bacon. Lewis served as chaplain to Bacon before becoming dean of Oriel College, Oxford, with Bacon’s assistance and under significant protest because of Lewis’s age (twenty-six). This fact explains the scribal additions of “Oriell” and “Oxon” (fol. 55v). Lewis resigned in 1621 under charges of sodomy. His unwavering support of his patron exudes from his opening lines:

When you awake (dull Brittans) & behold  
what treasure you haue throwne into the mould  
yo<sup>r</sup> ignorance in pruninge of a state  
you will confesse, & wll yo<sup>r</sup> rashnes hate  
for in a senceles furie you haue slayne  
a man as farr beyond yo<sup>r</sup> spungie brayne

divines accompany poems correctly attributed to courtiers Sir Walter Raleigh and William Herbert, earl of Pembroke.<sup>292</sup> Even verses by monarchs grace the miscellany, including King James's elegy for his queen and one of few extant copies of Queen Elizabeth's lament for her separation from a suitor, most likely Francis, duke of Anjou.<sup>293</sup>

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of Common knowledge, as is heaven from hell  
and yet you triumph, thinke you haue done well. (fol. 52v)

Also included is "D<sup>r</sup> Latworth on his death bedd" (fols. 56v-57r), beginning "My god, I speake it from a full assurance," by Edward Lapworth (or Latworth) (1574-1636), a physician and poet who served as Master of Magdalen College School, Oxford. Though first-line indices for the British Library and Bodleian Library indicate that the poem is attributed to Jonson in MS Egerton 2877 (fol. 104) and to "Mr. Wutton" "or D. Latwoorth" in MS Rawl. poet. 148 (fol. 71v), the poem is attributed to Lapworth alone in at least three Bodleian manuscripts. According to C. L. Kingsford, Lapworth is the poem's likely author ("Lapworth, Edward [1574-1636]," revised by Sarah Bakewell, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, vol. 32 [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], 556). This is not the only manuscript to contain poems by both Donne and Lapworth; an unlocated manuscript once owned by Dutch diplomat and poet Constantijn Huygens (1596-1687), which was described as item 41 by bookseller Janus Albinus in *Catalogus...librorum* (Dordrecht, 1696) in "Libri Manuscript in Folio," supposedly contains poems by Donne, Lapworth, Corbett, Goodyer, and others (Beal, "More Donne Manuscripts," *John Donne Journal* 6.2 [1987]: 215). Accurately assigned to Goodwyn is "The ffrench Progresse" (fols. 147r-151r), which begins "I went from England in to ffrance." George Morley's poem "On K: Ia: death" (fol. 165r-v), beginning "Those that haue eyes now ~~wake~~ ^wayle^ & weepe," is included as well. By "I: L:" are the popular poems "An Elegie on m<sup>r</sup> Iohn Washington who died in Spayne" (fols. 181r-82v), which begins "Hath he bene deade a monthe & can I bee," and "His Epitaph" (apparently also referring to Washington) (fol. 183r), beginning "Knowest thou whose these ashes were." "I: L:" refers to an unknown poet "Lewis," probably John or Joseph Lewis; perhaps the poet is a "Dr. Lewis," as the version in Folger MS V. a. 97 (p. 65) suggests. If so, the poet could be author and deacon John Lewis, who composed among other things *Melchizedech's Antitype* (1624) (*Alumni Cantabrigienses...* compiled by John Venn and J. A. Venn, part 1, vol. 3 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922], 81). Other possibilities include John Lewes of Queens' College, Cambridge, admitted to the Inner Temple in 1598 and called to the Bar in 1614 (vol. 3, 80), and "Joh. Lewis" in Werkworth who, according to Anthony A. Wood, conducted kinsman "Philip Holman of London scrivener" to the church after Holman's death in 1669 (*Athenae Oxonienses...* vol. 1 [London: Printed for Lackington, 1820], xxxvi). And correctly attributed to Rodney is a poem entitled "Sir Io: Rodney to the Co: of Heerford" (fols. 204r-206v), beginning "ffrom one that languisheth in discontent."

<sup>292</sup> MS Stowe 962 contains an untitled Raleigh poem sometimes called "To his Love" (fol. 85v), beginning "Callinge to minde mine eye went longe about." May argues that Raleigh composed the poem during the early or mid-1580s, which suggests that MS Stowe 962's collector(s) also was interested in poems of that period. For more on Raleigh's poems, see *The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh, A Historical Edition*, ed. Michael Rudick, Renaissance English Text Society, 7<sup>th</sup> series, vol. 23 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999). MS Stowe 962 also includes a poem entitled "The Earle of Pembroke" (fols. 111v-12r) that begins "If her disdayne least chaynge in you could moue." An unattributed "Answer" in the same verse form (fol. 112r), beginning "Tis loue breeds loue in me, & could disdayne," follows. Both three-stanza poems appear together as a six-stanza verse in *Poems written by the Right Honorable William earl of Pembroke* (1660). For more on Pembroke's verse, see "Poems Written by the Right Honourable William Earl of Pembroke (1660)," ed. Gaby E. Onderwyzer, vol. 79 (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1959).

<sup>293</sup> By Elizabeth I is "E: R: On Mounsiers departure" (fol. 231v), which begins "I greeue & dare not shew my discontent" (see *Queen Elizabeth I, Selected Works*, ed. Steven W. May [New York: Washington Square Press, 2004], 12-13). According to May, three of the poem's five extant manuscript copies (all

In addition to the many accurate ascriptions, two prove correct but slightly problematic. The note “Charracters *per* Iohne Done” (fol. 19v) appears just prior to “A Dunce,” the second and last of Donne’s characters. “Charracters” could apply to “A descriptione of a Scott at first sight” (fol. 19r), the Donne character included just prior to the ascription, and “A Dunce.” But a reader probably would assume that the attribution refers to “A Dunce” and its subsequent characters, works actually written by John Earle for *Microcosmographie*, making the ascription questionable but not inaccurate.<sup>294</sup>

Another complicated case appears in the untitled poem beginning “Sir at once from hence my lines & I depart” (fol. 164r), Donne’s verse letter to Thomas Woodward. Someone studying a microfilm or photocopy of the manuscript would assume that the poem is misattributed to “I:R:”—most likely “*Iohn Rowe*.” However, inspection of the original artifact reveals that “I:D:” originally was written in the margin, probably in a different script than that of the poem; for some unknown reason, another reader later altered the ascription from “D” to “R,” further illustrating the complexity of attribution studies and the importance of analyzing original artifacts.

Only two poems in MS Stowe 962 seem almost certainly misattributed, though even these “wrong” ascriptions have evoked considerable debate. Although Ben Jonson composed “Howerglasse” (fol. 144r), as the autograph copy given William Drummond of

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prepared at least thirty years after the courtship) connect the poem with Anjou, though a lack of contemporary copies “casts some doubt on its authenticity”; however, because all copies attribute the poem to the queen, May remarks, “it is possible that this very personal composition was discovered only after her death” (13). MS Stowe 962 also contains James I’s “The kinges verses on the queen<sup>e</sup>s death” (fol. 193r), which begins “Thee to invite to heauen god sent his starr” (see *The Poems of James VI. of Scotland*, ed. James Craigie, vol. 2 [Edinburgh; London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1958], xxvii).

<sup>294</sup> MS Stowe 962, folios 21r-29v. See John Earle, *Micro-cosmographie* (London: Printed by William Stansby for Robert Allot, 1628) (STC 7441). Earle’s characters appear in a mixed hand and possibly were added by a separate scribe; if so, this scribe probably also created the index prepared for the characters (fol. 31r), which appears to reflect a separate script from the index prepared for the paradoxes and problems (fol. 30r-v).

Hawthornden insures,<sup>295</sup> the poem is misassigned in MS Stowe 962 to Wotton. Yet, the mistake probably results from a later reader, not the original copyist. The version also does not constitute the only misattributed version, for the poem is assigned to Donne in other manuscript collections.<sup>296</sup> More confusion surrounds “The Lord Walden to y<sup>e</sup> princesse Elizabeth” (fol. 185r-v). “Lord Walden” probably refers to Theophilus Howard, called Lord Walden until he inherited the title of second earl of Suffolk on May 28, 1626, thus providing a verse termination date. Various manuscript and printed collections assign the poem, which begins “Wronge not deere mistresse of my ~~thoughtes~~ ^hart^,” to at least three other authors: Sir Robert Ayton, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sir Benjamin Rudyerd.<sup>297</sup> While acknowledging that this poem presents “one of the most severe problems” in seventeenth-century verse attribution studies, Charles B. Gullans argues for Ayton’s authorship.<sup>298</sup> Gullans dismisses Rudyerd offhand, calling the younger John Donne’s printed edition of Pembroke’s and Rudyerd’s *Poems* “a carelessly edited anthology of seventeenth-century poems”: “the mere presence of any poem in this volume constitutes evidence of nothing but the taste of the editor.”<sup>299</sup> Gullans also dismisses Walden, though without explanation, yet more extant manuscripts assign the

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<sup>295</sup> Beal, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, part 2, 258.

<sup>296</sup> According to Beal, the poem is included in at least three collections of Donne’s verse—MS Stowe 961, Harvard MS Eng. 966.5, and Cambridge MS Add. 8468—which indicates each compiler’s belief that it was written by Donne; it also appears in Harvard MS Eng. 966.7, which mainly contains Donne’s verse (*Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, part 2, 258-61). *Poems from Sir Kenelm Digby’s Papers in the Possession of Henry A. Bright* includes the poem, though Bright does not assign them to Digby. Bright suggests, “It is well known how intimate they were, and one copyist may well have written out the poems of both” (31).

<sup>297</sup> Though scholars have connected the poem’s appearance in *Poems written by the Right Honorable William earl of Pembroke* to Rudyerd, the lyric is headed “P,” which suggests that John Donne, junior, actually assigned the poem to Pembroke (sig. D2r-v).

<sup>298</sup> Gullans, “Raleigh and Ayton: The Disputed Authorship of ‘Wrong Not Sweete Empress of My Heart,’” 191. Also see Beal’s discussion of the poem (*Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, part 2, 366).

<sup>299</sup> Gullans, “Raleigh and Ayton: The Disputed Authorship of ‘Wrong Not Sweete Empress of My Heart,’” 195. Nixon concurs: “This volume is notoriously inaccurate, and claims for Pembroke and Rudyerd a number of well-attested poems of other authors” (“A Reading of Thomas Carew in Manuscript,” 67).

poem to Walden than to Ayton.<sup>300</sup> Although quantity of attributions may not correspond to accuracy, his comment that manuscript texts attributed to Walden are fragmentary and differ from other versions could prove significant. While it is possible that an abbreviated version somehow became connected erroneously to Walden (a prominent member of the court), it is surprising that various manuscripts assign the verse to a figure unknown as a poet and in a singular verse tradition, for collectors (or scribes) normally mis-ascribed verses to well-known poets, like Donne or Raleigh. Multiple manuscripts connect the verse to Walden, suggesting that, although Gullans' argument for Ayton appears strong, the lyric merits further investigation.<sup>301</sup> These complex cases demonstrate that MS Stowe 962's scribes made their only attribution "mistakes" not through carelessness but with ample justification.

### ***Debated and Debatable Poetic Ascriptions***

The conscientious compiler's inclusion of so many accurate or reasonable ascriptions, combined with the attention afforded the manuscript overall, inclines us to accept MS Stowe 962's additional fourteen ascriptions. Six of the assigned verses appear

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<sup>300</sup> Though only two manuscript copies of the poem are attributed to Ayton, three copies are ascribed to Walden, whom Gullans does not identify. The poem is assigned to Raleigh in nine manuscripts and in *Wits Interpreter* (1655), which contains a second shortened and unattributed copy as well. Gullans notes versions attributed to Walden in Corpus Christi College MS 327 (fols. 10v-11) and Bodleian MS Ashmole 781 (fol. 143). The poem also is ascribed to Walden in Yale Osborn MS b. 197 (fol. 212).

<sup>301</sup> Beal notes the link between verses as well, including the complete poem in the Raleigh entry, for "MSS which throw light on the textual history of one poem will be of obvious relevance to that of the other" (*Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, part 2, 366). Assigning the poem's author seems further complicated by differences among the "Raleigh" and "Ayton" versions. Gullans calls attention to a six-line pentameter stanza beginning "Our Passions are most like to floods and streams" that opens some poetic versions, while subsequent stanzas are quatrains of alternating tetrameter and trimeter lines. Extant manuscript versions containing the introductory stanza attribute the poem to Raleigh; thus, Raleigh apparently composed only the first stanza, while Ayton composed the remainder of the poem. Gullans argues that, due to confusion based on obvious similarities and perhaps on readers' practices of adding poems into commonplace books under topic headings (such as "Passions"), scribes conflated the stanzas and circulated a composite poem.

in other manuscripts, and their authorship has proven controversial. Questions surround, for example, the brave author extolling “Courage” in the untitled epigram “Cowardes feare to dy: but Courage stout / Rather then liue in snuffe will be put out” (fol. 132r), though seventeenth-century manuscripts proffer only one author: Sir Walter Raleigh.<sup>302</sup> Justifiable skepticism surrounds Raleigh’s complex canon, yet this ascription seems to reflect one of several informed attributions by MS Stowe 962’s prudent compiler.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> Editor Michael Rudick lists the poem, first printed in *Sir Walter Raleighs Sceptick* (1651), as a verse attributed to Raleigh after his death. Rudick notes its appearance in MS Stowe 962, with the marginal annotation “Rawleigh one a Candle snuffe,” as well as other manuscripts. According to Rudick, “The poem’s notion is a commonplace for courage in the face of death, used once by Raleigh himself in *Instructions to his Son*: ‘better it were not to live than to live a coward’ (1632 ed., sig. D1). It could have been written to honor his behavior, and later become attributed to him” (*The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh: A Historical Edition*, lxxii. Also see 133 and 177-78). Many manuscript verses were ascribed to Raleigh without warrant, although no Raleigh poems, save commendatory verses, apparently were printed during his lifetime. An encomium on “Courage stout” seems at first a likely candidate for a posthumous supplement to Raleigh’s canon, yet manuscript evidence supports Raleigh’s authorship. In addition to manuscripts noted by Rudick, the poem appears in at least two extant, seemingly unconnected manuscripts, both assigning the poem to Raleigh. Rudick notes the poem’s appearance in Dr. Williams’s Libr. Jones B.60 (p. 267) and British Library MSS Harley 39 and Add. 18044 (fol. 156r, transcribed from a copy of Raleigh’s *Remains*, according to Rudick). However, copies attributed to Raleigh also appear in Bodleian MSS Don. e. 6 (fol. 16v) and Ashmole 1463 (fol. 13r). Although MS Ashmole 1463 is dated “8 March 1669” (fol. 1r), the folio containing the poem (fol. 13r) also contains two short poems on the death of Archbishop Bancroft (1610) and an unkind elegy for Secretary Cecil, who died in 1612. These poems probably were written close to the death dates of their subjects, which suggests that the manuscript (or at least certain sections, including this one) contains poems composed long before 1669. If composed by Raleigh, the poem would not constitute Raleigh’s only known two-line epigram, for apparently he exchanged playful verses with Henry Noel (or “Noe L”), such as “The word of denial, and the Letter of fifty / Makes the gentleman’s name that will never be thrifty.” May accepts Raleigh’s authorship of the epigram, although he acknowledges Rudick’s justifiable hesitation; see *The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts*, 359-63.

<sup>303</sup> An interesting case regarding two other prominent Renaissance poets appears in the verse “In prayse of ons M<sup>tes</sup>,” attributed to “ffr: Beamont” (fol. 62r). Generally assigned to Carew as “The Comparison,” the anti-Petrarchan lyric beginning “Dearest, thy tresses are not thredes of gould” appears in multiple seventeenth-century manuscripts and in printed editions, including *Poems By Thomas Carevv Esquire* (London: Printed by I.D. for Thomas Walkley, 1640) (STC 4620), sigs. M4v-M5r. Beal lists extant manuscript copies in entries 44-95 for Thomas Carew (*Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 2, part 1, 49-52). Yet, only three manuscripts connect the poem to Carew, thanks in part to its inclusion in the posthumous collection of Carew’s verse, as the note “Printed in Carew’s poems 1640” in British Library MS Add. 21433 (fol. 90) attests. Carew editor Rhodes Dunlap includes the poem as Carew’s (*The Poems of Thomas Carew with His Masque Coelum Britannicum*). However, according to Nixon, Carew’s canon requires fresh consideration, for Dunlap’s edition “dislodges Carew from the culture of scribal publication in which his verse was published, circulated and read” (“A Reading of Thomas Carew in Manuscript,” 1). Nixon notes authorship charges to Carew, Donne, Jonson (it seems), Francis Beaumont, John Grange, “Rob. Gar,” and King Charles, and Beal also lists a manuscript attribution to Sir John Beaumont in British Library MS Add. 25707 (fol. 76v). After studying fifty-three extant manuscript and printed witnesses of the poem, twelve of which are ascribed, Nixon concludes, “it appears that the issue of authorship must

The collection assigns to Donne two popular manuscript poems that do not appear in early printed collections. “Woman” (fol. 64v)—which playfully denigrates that bane of masculine existence, that temptress who plagues mankind, in the typically hyperbolic terms of countless Renaissance poems—is ascribed to Donne, whose authorship seems plausible though doubtful.<sup>304</sup> Similarly, the volume ascribes “A paradox on a paynted face” (fols. 49r-50r) to Donne, the most frequently assigned author. Reasons emerge in the dramatic speaker’s bold, flirtatious opening address to his prey: “Not kisse? by Ioue I must & make impression.”<sup>305</sup> The poem’s amusing coyness, yet ultimate failure to seduce effectively, recalls multiple Donne lyrics. This poem, ascribed only to two additional, little-known versifiers, remained unpublished until 1660 when the younger John Donne incorporated the lyric in Pembroke’s *Poems*.<sup>306</sup> Yet, the younger Donne’s

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remain doubtful. Certainly, there is evidence to support the ascription to Carew, but it is not so strong...that the poem should be accepted as canonical. At the same time, the evidence of ascription to other poets is inconclusive” (65). The verse also fails to appear among the forty-seven Carew poems housed in the extraordinary Gower manuscript, an indisputably authoritative manuscript discovered by Beal in 2000 that contains additions and corrections in Carew’s hand to well-known verses, such as “The Rapture” and Carew’s 1631 elegy for Donne (Beal, “An Authorial Collection of Poems by Thomas Carew: The Gower Manuscript,” *English Manuscript Studies, 1100-1700* 8 [2000]: 160-85). Based on the latter poem’s inclusion and on the absence of elegies that Carew composed in 1632, Beal convincingly argues that the manuscript likely was constructed in 1631. Another significant manuscript discovered by Beal, a list of thirty individual poems including “dearest thy tresses are not threads of gold” that was “lent to M<sup>r</sup> Murhouse” in “decembr 1632,” further complicates Carew’s authorship: if Carew composed the poem, he either chose to exclude it from the extensive Gower collection or composed it during the short interim between 1631 and “decembr 1632,” when the poem already was circulating among contemporary readers. Both scenarios seem feasible, but future editors of Carew’s and Beaumont’s poems—both in need of critical editions—must take seriously MS Stowe 962’s attribution of “Dearest, thy tresses are not thred~~es~~ of gould” to Francis Beaumont.

<sup>304</sup> The poem begins “Oh heavenly powers why did you bringe to light.” While a lack of additional Donne ascriptions contributes to reservations about authorship, the poem only is offered one alternative manuscript attribution, to an unknown poet. First-line indices for the Beinecke Library, Bodleian Library, British Library, Folger Library, and Houghton Library catalogue thirty additional copies of the poem, only one of which seems to offer an ascription: “Mr. Guliford” (Bodleian MS Rawl. poet. 214, fol. 81).

<sup>305</sup> The poem appears in MS Eng. poet. e. 14 (fol. 83) and in MS Stowe 961 (fols. 70r-71r).

<sup>306</sup> *Poems written by the Right Honorable William earl of Pembroke* (1660) (sigs. G7r-G8r). According to various libraries’ first-line indices, the poem also appears in the following manuscripts: Bodleian MSS CCC. 327, folio 15v; CCC. 328, folio 32 (attributed to Sherly); Eng. poet. e. 14, folio 83 (attributed to Dr. Dun); Malone 21, folio 74; Malone 117, folio 29v (attributed to Mr. Wm. Baker); British Library MS Eg. 2230, folio 24; Folger MSS V. a. 97, p. 165 (“F. Sherly”); V. a. 245; V. a. 322, p. 130; W. a. 118, folio 6v (“A paradox on the praise of a painted face Taken from *Parnassus Biceps*...1656, p. 97”); and Yale Osborn



printing of the poem only proves that he had access to a copy. The poem lacks the “P” or the “R” heading that accompanies the numerous poems that he apparently assigned to Pembroke or Rudyerd with confidence. Misattributions by this arguably “irresponsible editor”—who caused this collection to be, although “not a miscellany by intention,” certainly “a miscellany in fact”—cloud the situation.<sup>307</sup> In addition, in 1660 the poem also was published in *Le prince d’amour* (a verse miscellany that accompanied Rudyerd’s account of the 1597/8 Middle Temple revels), assigned to “I.D.”<sup>308</sup> Both poems clarify the need for a thorough reconsideration of Donne’s dubia, for investigation of apocryphal poems can inform our knowledge, not only of his canon, but of the contemporary reputation of his verse.

MS Stowe 962’s “A farewell to the world per Sir Kenellm Digby. 1635” (fols. 33r-34r) also is assigned to Donne in various manuscripts. While additional analysis could prove either poet the likely author, the case for Digby’s authorship seems more solid at present.<sup>309</sup> In 1653, Izaak Walton attributed the poem, which begins “ffarewell

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MS b. 205, folio 30r, as well as variant versions in MSS b. 62, p. 97, and b. 200, p. 430. Grierson also notes its appearance in British Library MS Harley 3910; the Stephens manuscript; Trinity College, Dublin, MS G. 2. 21; and *Le prince d’amour; or the prince of love* (1660) (Wing R2189), although he does not discuss its interesting attribution in the latter. The poem appears without attribution in *Parnassus Biceps* (1656), p. 97-100 (sigs. H1r-H2v), entitled “A Paradox on the praise of a painted face.”

<sup>307</sup> Edwin Wolf, II, *The Textual Importance of Manuscript Commonplace Books of 1620-1660*

(Charlottesville: Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, 1949), 16.

<sup>308</sup> *Le prince d’amour; or the prince of love* (1660), sigs. H2r-H3r. In light of such possibilities, Grierson’s explanation for relegating the poem to “Dubia” seems inadequate: “A Paradoxe of a Painted Face was attributed to Donne because he had written a prose *Paradox* entitled *That Women ought to paint*” (*The Poems of John Donne*, vol. 2, 268). Although this explanation appears logical and could prove correct, lack of other substantiated claims for authorship makes one curious about this lively poem and unwilling to dismiss its attribution to Donne completely. Manning assigns the poem to Rudyerd, though without explanation, save “A paradox in praise of a painted woman is another of Rudyerd’s severe satires upon the supposed employment of washes and rouges to supply Nature’s fading colour, and fill up the wrinkles of destroying Time” (*Memoirs of Sir Benjamin Rudyerd, Knt.*, Appendix, vii).

<sup>309</sup> The poem also is assigned to Henry King, Raleigh, and Wotton, though most manuscripts ascribe the poem to Digby or to Donne. For a list of manuscript copies of the poem, see Beal’s entries 219-257 for Sir Henry Wotton (*Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, part 2, pages 581-84 and 636). In addition, the final twelve lines of the poem appear (unattributed) in British Library MS Add. 37719 (Sir John Gibson’s commonplace book, 1655-1660), folio 174v. The poem also appears in Bodleian MSS Rawl. D.

the gilded follies pleasing troubles,” to Donne with trepidation in *The Compleat Angler*: “it is a farewell to the vanities of the world, and some say written by *D<sup>r</sup>. D.* but let them bee writ by whom they will, he that writ them had a brave soul, and must needs be possest with happy thoughts at the time of their composure.”<sup>310</sup> Walton’s addition of “I hope he was an Angler” to the 1655 edition probably reflects hesitation in continuing to include the poem without connecting it to an angler, a concern that could explain the altered attribution in 1661: “some say written by Sir *Harry Wotton*, who I told you was an excellent Angler.”<sup>311</sup> Yet, the multiple ascriptions to Digby appear more logical, for “A farewell” resembles in subject, theme, and style an autograph poem found among Digby’s own papers, one composed in response to the 1633 death of his wife, Venetia.<sup>312</sup> In addition, John Cotgrave assigned the poem to Digby in *Wits Interpreter* (1655),

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260, folio 38r-v (entitled “S<sup>r</sup> Kenelm Digby’s farewell to England”); Rawl. poet. 90, folios 1r and 2r (possibly early eighteenth century); Rawl. poet. 153, folios 45v-46r (entitled “Concerning happiness.”; the second of two copies of the poem in this manuscript and could be early eighteenth century); and Rawl. poet. 213, folios 59r-58v (variant version, found in a section of the manuscript bound upside down, entitled “Some Verses of S. Kenelme Digby, upon the vanity of earthly things; (though a litle altered from what they were;) being an ingenious farwell to the sweets of life, & grandeurs of state”). Wotton editor J. Hannah, who includes the poem as “Author uncertain,” notes, “H. Nicolas, without any authority that I know of, says that ‘these verses are also said to have been written by Sir W. Raleigh, when a prisoner in the Tower, shortly before his execution’” (*The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh Collected and Authenticated with those of Sir Henry Wotton and Other Courtly Poets from 1540 to 1650* [London: George Bell and Sons, 1875], 109).

<sup>310</sup> Izaak Walton, *The compleat angler* (London: Printed by T. Maxey for Rich. Marriot, 1653) (Wing W661), 243. The poem appears on 243-45.

<sup>311</sup> Walton, *The compleat angler* (1655) (Wing W662), 350; the poem appears on 351-52. Walton, *The compleat angler* (1661) (Wing W663), 251; the poem appears on 251-53.

<sup>312</sup> The poem reflects Digby’s choice to eschew his country in 1635 for Paris, desiring what he imagined as intellectual and religious freedom, for in France he could acknowledge openly his conversion to Catholicism. Bright calls attention to this connection, citing Mr. Warner of the British Library (*Poems from Sir Kenelm Digby’s Papers in the Possession of Henry A. Bright*). The poem begins,

My thoughts and holy meditations  
shall henceforth be my recreations:  
As for the worldes applause or Princes grace,  
youthfull delightes, or hope of higher place,  
since they are thinges w<sup>ch</sup> others onely lend  
my happinesse on them shall nere depend. (lines 1-6)

Another autograph poem found in the family collection, beginning “Buri’d in the shades of horrid night / my vexed soule doth groane, exil’d from light,” also echoes connections to “A farewell to the world,” further supporting MS Stowe 962’s ascription.

possibly in direct refutation of *The Compleat Angler*.<sup>313</sup> Further analysis of the various poetic copies within their manuscript contexts could throw light on which “brave soul” actually composed “A farewell to the world.”

Perhaps most interesting among the debatable verse is “An Elegie on the death of the famous acto<sup>r</sup> Rich: Burbage, who died 13<sup>o</sup> martij A<sup>o</sup> 1618,” an 86-line poem (transcribed in Appendix 4) traditionally considered anonymous, but assigned in MS Stowe 962 to “Io: ffletcher.”<sup>314</sup> Scholars frequently treat this elegy—the “most interesting of the poems to his memory”<sup>315</sup>—as a biographical reference tool, for the poem reveals intimate particulars of Burbage’s life and career, including major tragic roles that he originated: “young Hamlett, old Hieronimo. / Kinge Leer, the greeu’d Moore; & more besides” (fol. 62v). The poem demonstrates authorial awareness of details that only someone close to Burbage likely would know, recalling that “death...first cunningly made seasure on thy tongue / then on the rest” (fol. 63r), which

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<sup>313</sup> *Wits Interpreter* (1655); the poem appears on 264-65, entitled “By Sir Kenelme Digby.”

<sup>314</sup> E. K. Chambers first noted this poetic ascription, though he did not supply subsequent discussion (*Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2 [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923], 309). The poem, found on folios 62v-63v, begins “Some skilfull Limner healp me, if not soe, / some sad tragoedian, healp t’expresse my woe” (fol. 62v). One could argue that an accomplished playwright would be unlikely to begin an epitaph by calling on another artist’s assistance, but the introductory lines could suggest humility (or feigned humility) or recognition of the subject’s supreme merits. In addition, “tragoedian” likely refers to one who performs in tragedies, not one who writes them. Under the pseudonym “Eu: H.” Joseph Haslewood first presented and discussed the poem in “The Gentleman’s Magazine” (“Fly Leaves. No. XXVI. Richard Burbadge, the Tragedian,” June 1825, 497-99). Haslewood notes, “If it may be supposed to have flowed from the imagination of an enthusiast of the drama, yet, it must be admitted, there is a display of strong critical judgment, as from one who frequently formed part of the auditory at the theatre” (498). He also suggests, though without support, that the poem likely was printed (498). Charlotte Carmichael Stopes reprints this transcription of the poem, with corrections from another manuscript source, in *Burbage and Shakespeare’s Stage* (London: De La More Press, 1913), 118-20. Stopes provides additional verses found in a single manuscript copy, originally printed by Collier (120-21). Because MS Stowe 962 offers an excellent text inscribed by an informed reader (and printed texts are not easily accessible), I provide the complete transcription in Appendix 4.

<sup>315</sup> S. L. Lee, “Burbage, Richard (1567?-1619),” in *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 7 (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1886), 288. The poem appears without ascription in Folger MS V. a. 97 (p. 90) and Yale Osborn MS b. 62 (p. 89), according to first-line indices. Lee also remarks, “Five transcripts of this elegy of the seventeenth century are extant: one at Warwick Castle, two at Thirlestane House, and two, formerly in the possession of Haslewood...in Mr. Huth’s library” (288).

scholars have taken to mean that Burbage died of paralysis, further indicating the critical weight afforded the elegy. The title of the copy in MS Stowe 962 also provides the correct death date—information probably not widely known among contemporaries—as listed in the registers of St. Leonard’s, Shoreditch, lending this copy credence.

The remainder of the elegy reveals the poet’s extensive interest in and familiarity with the theater. After insisting,

Poetes, whose glorie whilome twas to heare  
yo<sup>r</sup> lines so well exprest, hence forth forbear  
& write no more, (fol. 63r)

the speaker elaborates in terms suggesting familiarity, perhaps even personal experience, with play-writing:

Blurr all yo<sup>r</sup> leaues w<sup>th</sup> blottes, y<sup>t</sup> all you write  
may be but on sad black, & vppon it  
draw marble lines, that may out last the sunn  
& stand like trophees when the world is don. (fol. 63r)

Though the persona refers to “you,” the extensive lament suggests that his instructions might apply to the elegist’s own miserable, problematic state as well. In addition, seventeenth-century playwrights frequently referred to themselves in second- or third-person, as Fletcher’s prologue to *Tamer Tamed* reveals. When the speaker next addresses players, first-person language creeps into the verse in “play now noe more at all, when round about / we looke, & misse the Atlas of yo<sup>r</sup> spheare,” further attesting to the poet’s connection to the stage (fol. 63v). Currently (and surprisingly), the only playwright known to offer Burbage an epitaph is Thomas Middleton. Yet, Fletcher—chief

playwright for the King's Men at Blackfriars during Burbage's final years—seems the most plausible candidate to write an informed elegy for the theater's leading actor.<sup>316</sup>

One could argue that Fletcher's close connection to Burbage might have inclined a knowledgeable compiler to assign the poem to Fletcher. Although further archival research and a detailed comparison to Fletcher's dramatic and non-dramatic verse is required, identification of Fletcher as author would explain the elegist's extensive, detailed knowledge of Burbage's career, adding credibility to the poem's assertions regarding Burbage's stage roles and death. Authorial confirmation also would enhance awareness of Burbage's relationship with Fletcher. The ascription certainly calls attention to the need to reassess Fletcher's poetic canon, incorporating extant manuscript evidence unknown during preparation of the most "recent" edition of Fletcher's non-dramatic verse in 1846.<sup>317</sup> If correctly attributed, the elegy could offer significant insights about the celebrated actor who originated Shakespeare's leading roles and about Fletcher, a prominent playwright whose poetry merits renewed interest and further critical investigation, as do the miscellany's other debatable poems.

### *Newly Discovered Poetry and Prose*

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<sup>316</sup> Fletcher collaborated with Shakespeare for the King's Men just before Shakespeare's retirement. Apparently, none of Fletcher's plays written after 1614 were composed for another company (Gordon McMullan, "Fletcher, John [1579–1625]," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, vol. 20 [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], 107-13).

<sup>317</sup> *The Works of Beaumont & Fletcher*, ed. Alexander Dyce.

MS Stowe 962 also offers apparently unique copies of eight pieces.<sup>318</sup> “A young gentleman to his father beinge offended at his marriage she beinge poore” (fols. 59v-61v) is assigned to yet unidentified author “Iohn Alford.” Perhaps the poem, which begins “In thy weake flesh w<sup>t</sup> art thou man,” was composed by a son of the great defender of the House of Commons, Edward Alford, whose son John also sat in parliament. But Joseph Alford, author of *The Soules Dispensatorie* (among other works), seems a more likely authorial candidate, both because he is an established writer and because he, like William Lewis, was of Oriel College, Oxford.<sup>319</sup> A scribe’s mistaken inclusion of “Iohn” easily could be explained: if the copyist made use of a version attributed to “Io. Alford,” he could have mistaken “Ioseph” for “Iohn.” As previously mentioned, scribes commonly employed initials and shortened forms of names, as demonstrated by two other attributed verses apparently found exclusively in MS Stowe 962—assigned to the unidentified poet “E:W:.”<sup>320</sup>

Four other seemingly exclusive attributed pieces appear in MS Stowe 962. One “Fran: Phillips” writes an epistle “To the kinges most excelent Ma<sup>tie</sup>” (fols. 37r-39v) that begins “Most dreade Soveraygne. If the thrones of heven & earth were to be solicited on & the same.”<sup>321</sup> In addition to this prose tribute to the living is a poetic tribute to the

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<sup>318</sup> The poems do not appear in first-line indices for manuscript poetry at the Beinecke Library, Bodleian Library, Folger Shakespeare Library, or Houghton Library, nor in additional manuscripts at the British Library. The poems are not recorded in *Elizabethan Poetry: A Bibliography and First-line Index of English Verse, 1559-1603*, ed. Steven W. May, 3 vols. (London; New York: Thoemmes Continuum, 2004), nor in *A Bibliographical Catalogue and First-Line Index of Printed Anthologies of English Poetry to 1640*, ed. Frederic William Baue (Lanham, Maryland; Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2002). Perhaps this study will encourage additional scholarly interest in these poems.

<sup>319</sup> *The soules dispensatorie or, A treasure for true believers...By Joseph Alford Mr. of Arts, and sometime of Oriel Colledge in Oxford* (London: Printed by W.B. for John Williams, 1649).

<sup>320</sup> These poems begin “I woo’d my mistris on a time” (fol. 219v) and “Behold a prodegie” (fol. 219v). While one is tempted to speculate that “E:W:” could represent Edmund Waller, the poems do not appear among his verse.

<sup>321</sup> Although I have been unable to identify the writer with certainty, *Alumni Cantabrigienses* (part 1, vol. 3, 355) mentions a Francis Phillips who matriculated from Trinity Hall (Easter 1623) and was perhaps son of

dead: “Verses made vppon the death of Henry Prince of Wales &<sup>c</sup> per Ar: Manneringe kt: & sent to his deare freinde E: V: kt:” (fols. 151v-155r), which begins “To thee as knowinge best my hart.” The elegy, addressed by an unidentified writer to an unidentified recipient, reflects common sentiments expressed in the outpourings of grief that followed the death of young Prince Henry in 1612, including a poem by Donne. MS Stowe 962 contains two other apparently unique attributed elegies, both composed for “Io: Pulteney,” almost certainly Sir John Pultney (or Poultney) of Misterton, Leicestershire.<sup>322</sup> Unidentified author “Io: Crowther” composed an elegy “Vppon the most Religious death of the generouse & truly noble Io: Pulteney who died 15: May: A<sup>o</sup> 1637” (fols. 34v-35v), which begins “How sway my tro<sup>u</sup>bled thoughtes tweene greefe & glee.” Perhaps “Io: Crowther” is Anthony Wood’s “Dr. Jos. Crowther of S. John’s coll,” Oxford (and mentioned in the *Alumni Cantabrigienses*), possibly providing yet another link to Oxford University.<sup>323</sup> The other elegy, “To the Memorie of Iohn Pulteney Esquire who died 15<sup>o</sup> May A<sup>o</sup> 1637 a 27: of his age” (fol. 242v), was written by Oxford man George Morley. Hobbs noted MS Stowe 962’s accurately attributed copy of this

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Francis Phillips of Teddington, Middlesex. Phillips, of Kempton Park, Sunbury, Middlesex, was admitted to the Inner Temple in 1624, became a barrister in 1632, and was made a bencher in 1659. He died in 1674.

<sup>322</sup> Pultney, ancestor (it seems) of the earl of Bath, had at least three children: Magdalene, first wife of Sir Thomas Aston; Jane, wife of Sir Clipsby Crew (friend of the poet Robert Herrick); and William, who attended King’s College, Cambridge, studied at the Inner Temple, and was later called to the bar and knighted (*Alumni Cantabrigienses*, part 1, vol. 3, 386).

<sup>323</sup> Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, vol. 4, 146. According to Cambridge records, Crowther (son of Thomas, of Blackwall, Middlesex) apparently received his B.A. from St. John’s College, Oxford, in 1629, his M.A. from Oxford in 1633, his B.D. from Oxford in 1638-39, and his D.D. from Cambridge in 1660. He was a Fellow of St. John’s College, Oxford, in 1628-1648 but was ejected. He later served as principal of St. Mary Hall, 1664-1689, and as chaplain to King James II. He died in the Fleet in 1689 (vol. 1, 429). A John Crowther received his B.A. from St. John’s College, Cambridge, in 1601-2 and his M.A. in 1605; he died in 1637 (vol. 1, 428).

elegy, asserting, “A single ascription of a poem’s authorship may still stand against all others if the manuscript in which it occurs can be shown to have authority.”<sup>324</sup>

Since only two of its fifty-four ascriptions appear likely to be inaccurate, MS Stowe 962 maintains considerable “authority.” Analysis of its ascriptions, provenance, compiler(s) and scribes, and general level of precision—as demonstrated by sound texts, revisions and annotations, and indices—illuminates the unusually high quality of the collection, laying the groundwork for investigation of the final apparently unique attributed poem: “The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned. to *Queen Elizabeth*.”

## Part II: The Earl of Southampton’s Poetic Plea?

Study of MS Stowe 962 as a unified artifact allows us to consider “The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned. to *Queen Elizabeth*” (transcribed in Appendix 5) with full knowledge of the poem’s manuscript context.<sup>325</sup> This poem could contribute a significant chapter to our story of the important and controversial historical figure Henry Wriothesley, earl of Southampton, dedicatee of Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* and perhaps (though it has been much debated) the young man of Shakespeare’s

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<sup>324</sup> Hobbs, *Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellany Manuscripts*, 140. The poem begins “True to him selfe, & others, w<sup>th</sup> whom both.”

<sup>325</sup> The poem is absent from first-line indices for manuscripts housed at the Beinecke Library, Bodleian Library, Folger Shakespeare Library, Houghton Library, and Huntington Library. In addition, the poem is not listed in *Elizabethan Poetry: A Bibliography and First-line Index of English Verse, 1559-1603* or in *A Bibliographical Catalogue and First-Line Index of Printed Anthologies of English Poetry to 1640*, which indicates that the poem does not appear in seventeenth-century printed anthologies (at least through 1640). The poem also does not appear in music manuscripts of the British Library (*Catalogue of Manuscript Music in the British Museum*, ed. Augustus Hughes-Hughes, 3 vols. [London: British Museum, 1906-1909]). I continue to search other archives. Additionally, some indices prove more reliable than others; the poem actually is not listed in British Library first-line indices, demonstrating the potential for error in a library containing copious seventeenth-century manuscripts.



*Sonnets* and/or “M<sup>r</sup> W. H.”<sup>326</sup> “The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned. to *Queen Elizabeth*” appears to provide Southampton’s plea for life after being found guilty of treason for his contribution to Essex’s February 1601 rebellion. Elizabeth did, in fact, take pity on Southampton: though Essex was beheaded, Southampton’s sentence was commuted to life in the Tower, where he remained until the queen’s death when the newly crowned James I immediately pardoned him.<sup>327</sup> Queen Elizabeth’s change of heart never has been explained fully, though Southampton’s biographers credit Robert Cecil for intervening on Southampton’s behalf.<sup>328</sup> However, Cecil had multiple reasons not to

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<sup>326</sup> William Herbert, third earl of Pembroke, is considered the other likely candidate. We cannot be certain that a historical figure lies behind the young man of Shakespeare’s sonnets, though various critical studies argue for his existence. A. L. Rowse declares, “It is now perfectly clear that Shakespeare’s Sonnets were written to and for his patron [Southampton] during the same period”; there is “not the remotest possibility that they could have been written for anyone else” (*Shakespeare’s Southampton: Patron of Virginia* [London; Melbourne; Toronto: Macmillan, 1965], ix). In *Wriothesley’s Roses in Shakespeare’s Sonnets, Poems and Plays* (Baltimore: Clevedon Books, 1993), Martin Green also argues that Southampton is the youth of Shakespeare’s sonnets. He claims that the shield of red and white roses over the door at Titchfield accounts for the excessive rose imagery in Shakespeare’s sonnets, long poems, and early plays. Green also argues that it was through Shakespeare’s friendship with Southampton that Shakespeare probably gained much of his knowledge regarding Essex. While we cannot establish with certainty whether the young man represents Pembroke, Southampton, or someone else, we can contend that Shakespeare likely composed many of the sonnets with at least one specific intended audience in mind: an aristocratic young man considering marriage. Whether or not “M<sup>r</sup> W.H.” refers to “Wriothesley, Henry” remains far from settled. For a brief overview of the controversy, see Park Honan, *Shakespeare, A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), especially 181-91; or Stephen Booth, ed., *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 547-48. In the “Introduction” to her edition of *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, Katherine Duncan-Jones discusses the critical traditions surrounding these figures, though in the context of arguing in favor of Pembroke (Arden Shakespeare series, gen. eds. Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan [Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1997]).

<sup>327</sup> Less than two weeks after Elizabeth I’s death, James I ordered Southampton’s release, which took place on April 10, 1603. Southampton was pardoned fully on May 16, and his title and properties were restored on July 21 (Green, *Wriothesley’s Roses in Shakespeare’s Sonnets, Poems and Plays*, 215). An extant copy of James I’s letter of release sent “ffrom our Pallaice at Hollyroode howse: this 5<sup>th</sup> of Aprill 1603” appears in British Library MS Add. 33051 (fol. 53). James calls Southampton “whom wee perceaued also the latte Q. our sister (notwithstandinge his faulte towardes her) was moued to exempte from the stroke of Iustice” (fol. 53r); he tells the Privy Council and nobles that he already has written to the Lieutenant of the Tower to release both Southampton and “Henry Neuill knighte,” cousin of Secretary Cecil.

<sup>328</sup> Though most biographers mainly credit Cecil, they offer other potential reasons for Elizabeth’s decision, such as the likelihood that the queen “would not want to extinguish a peerage, and as yet Southampton had no heir” (Rowse, *Shakespeare’s Southampton: Patron of Virginia*, 164). G. P. V. Akrigg suggests that, in addition to Cecil’s intervention, “it is likely that after Essex had been executed the government felt that mercy to the other earl might help to conciliate public opinion” (*Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton* [London: Hamish Hamilton, 1968], 130). Akrigg’s biographical information has been particularly useful for my general argument, though I also have gleaned valuable information from Rowse, *Shakespeare’s*

fight for Southampton's release, as discussed below. During a period in which male prisoners regularly composed verses to implore Queen Elizabeth's mercy, it would be no surprise to discover that Southampton originally wrote the heartfelt petition copied in MS Stowe 962. If so, the poem reveals a political prisoner employing verse as a means to persuade a monarch for clemency and contributes to modern understanding of the circulation and the significance of Elizabethan courtier poetry, while presenting evidence of a "new" Renaissance poet.

Although multiple references in the poem identify Southampton's condition and circumstances, making it unlikely that the speaker could be anyone else, the poem could represent a persona piece written after the event's occurrence by a poet evoking the voice of the doomed earl.<sup>329</sup> Poets both unknown and well known—including Donne—transformed themselves in poetry and in prose into individuals ranging from Sapho to Sidney for literary effect. An attempt to categorize this poem as a persona piece or as an authorial work requires speculation about a man who already has inspired numerous speculations, and, although "Speculation, properly conducted,... can be knowledge in the making," what "is required is that neither author nor reader confuse speculation, however

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*Southampton: Patron of Virginia*; Stopes, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's Patron* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922); and Park Honan, "Wriothesley, Henry, third earl of Southampton (1573–1624)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, vol. 60 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 515-20. My debt to these resources is apparent throughout the discussion. As Stopes's title attests, critics tend to accept that Shakespeare received patronage from his only dedicatee in print, although we lack records to verify this likelihood. If so, Southampton proves Shakespeare's only recognized aristocratic patron. As editor Colin Burrow notes, "Southampton evidently offered more than promises to those who dedicated works to him. And the fact that Shakespeare went on to dedicate *Lucrece* to the Earl in 1594, and did so in notably warm terms, suggests that Southampton gave him something. Whether it was friendship, love, hospitality during the plague, or money, or any or all of these things will probably never be known" (*The Complete Sonnets and Poems* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002], 13)

<sup>329</sup> One might wonder if a friend or a secretary (perhaps a poet) composed the verses for Southampton in order to appease the livid queen. However, this scenario proves improbable due to the strict limitations on access to the earl early in his imprisonment, with his Tower guard and members of the Privy Council among Southampton's few allowed visitors.

interesting, with proven fact.”<sup>330</sup> An absence of additional Southampton poems for comparison challenges our efforts, though previous studies have attempted to assign many of Shakespeare’s sonnets to the earl in spite of this deficiency.<sup>331</sup> And lack of additional manuscript copies of the poem seems surprising: if the earl of Southampton did write this verse, why does this copy alone seem to remain?

Such questions require thoughtful study as we consider the poem’s authorship through contextualizing “The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned” in MS Stowe 962. But first, because references in the poem point to the author’s familiarity with specific, intimate details about Southampton’s career, health, even writing style, the present study considers his life prior to the death sentence commutation, particularly his relationships with Elizabeth I and Robert Cecil and his correspondence from the Tower in February/March 1601. We also explore, to the extent possible, the level of common public awareness by the 1620s and 1630s (when MS Stowe 962 apparently was compiled) regarding Southampton’s biographical details. The sheer abundance of references to the earl in print and in manuscript, as well as our inability to know what details passed via word of mouth, makes a comprehensive account of contemporary knowledge impossible; however, examining reports of the period is critical to establishing a sense of popular acquaintance with the poem’s deeply personal issues. Finally, we consider how study of MS Stowe 962 enhances our understanding of the

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<sup>330</sup> Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, xiii-xiv.

<sup>331</sup> Walter Thomson, for one, argues that Shakespeare only wrote approximately 100 of the sonnets assigned to him, while most others probably were written or collected by Southampton (*The Sonnets of William Shakespeare & Henry Wriothesley Third Earl of Southampton* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell; Liverpool: Henry Young & Sons, 1938]). Interestingly, Thomson believed Southampton capable of such writing, although Thomson consistently labels the supposedly non-Shakespearean sonnets as inferior and, thus, Southampton’s. One remark by Thomson rings true for this study as well: “It would have been easier to apportion the Sonnets to Shakespeare and Southampton respectively if we had had some earmarked examples of Southampton’s work from some other source” (46).

poem. Coupling modern and contemporary knowledge about the earl's life with analysis of these verses within their only identified manuscript context enables our attempt to determine authorship of "The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned."

### ***The Poem***

Whether composed by Southampton or by someone else, the rhetorical situation of this previously unprinted seventy-four line poem is the earl as speaker begging Elizabeth I for a pardon. The verse epistle emphasizes themes one might expect in a prisoner's plea for life and freedom: repentance, commitment to crown and country, and a longing for mercy. The iambic pentameter of the rhyming couplets varies fairly infrequently and effectively. Both the inverted initial foot in the first line ("Not to liue more at ease (Deare Prince) of thee") and the metrical variation in the subsequent line ("but w<sup>th</sup> new merrittes, I begg libertie") call immediate attention to the speaker's desire to prove himself worthy of forgiveness. The second line's enjambment establishes momentum, as the poem hastens toward what a treasonous prisoner might expect his queen most desirous to hear: that he yearns "to cancell old offences" (line 3). The poet also introduces lines with trochees to stress central concepts. The speaker bemoans "prisons" (line 25) and "cleauinge to walls" (line 32)—language that might evoke a monarch's sympathy, for such concerns seem wildly incongruent with the typical lifestyle of an earl (particularly a former favorite). The latter, jarring phrase occurs in an unusual but effective comparison of shellfish to prisoners awaiting execution: "prisoners condem'd, like fish w<sup>th</sup>in shells lie / cleauinge to walls, which when they're open'd die" (lines 31-32). Only "a pardon" (line 33) can alter a prisoner's fate.

“The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned. to *Queen Elizabeth*” is inundated with metaphors, some rhetorically sound but others ineffective, even odd. The speaker follows the previous simile by suggesting that “a pardon” can “take them from thence” (line 35) “as a worme takes a bullett from a gunn” (line 34). Though a reference to the rendering of a weapon unable to kill appears appropriate, equating Queen Elizabeth with a worm crawling into a gun barrel is tasteless and inept, particularly for the intended audience. Far more effectively, when the speaker attests, “had I the leprosie of Naaman / yo<sup>r</sup> mercie hath the same effectes as Io<sup>u</sup>rdan” (lines 17-18), he associates the queen with the miracle worker Elisha who cured Naaman’s condition.<sup>332</sup> He also (through mention of the river Jordan) links Elizabeth with the ultimate exemplar of “mercie,” Christ—a connection emphasized throughout the poem. Here and elsewhere the speaker apparently aims to illicit pathos through mentioning ailments, a common result of Tower imprisonment.

This seeming verse epistle by the earl of Southampton entails a raw, desperate plea from a broken speaker who barrages his sovereign-reader with metaphors while making a case for freedom from various angles, with the hope that some element or elements of the poem will move her to action. Though unpolished and sometimes peculiar, the poem proves lyrical and rhetorically powerful—regardless of its author.

### ***Henry Wriothesley’s Early Life***

Investigation of biographical and bibliographical data that could illuminate the circumstances of the poem’s composition adds to our understanding of the verse. In many ways, including his turn in the Tower, the third earl of Southampton’s life mirrors

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<sup>332</sup> The story of Naaman appears in the Bible in Kings II.

that of his father. Henry Wriothesley, senior, became second earl of Southampton at age five and was placed into the custody of the royal Master of the Wards, as his son would be after him. Quite unlike Thomas Wriothesley, first earl of Southampton and a major figure in the dissolution of monasteries under Henry VIII, the second earl followed the religious practices of his Catholic mother.<sup>333</sup> His country home in Titchfield became a haven for English Catholics, much like the nearby home of the first Viscount Montagu, whose daughter Anne married the second earl. Wriothesley was questioned occasionally and imprisoned twice for his religious fervor, once in the Tower (again anticipating his son) where he lived “a grim life” for 18 months.<sup>334</sup> As the son would appeal to Robert Cecil for assistance, the father appealed to William Cecil, Lord Burghley. In a letter of February 13, 1573, Southampton begs Burghley, “for God his safe to continue the same your honorable and charitable goodnes towardes me,” enclosing a petition that the earl asked Burghley to alter as needed and present to Elizabeth. The following day Southampton wrote to the Privy Council that he was “carefull and studious to leave no meane vndune by all humble and therw<sup>th</sup> faythfull submission, and attestation of loiall obedience, to recover her Ma<sup>ties</sup> good grace, opinion and favor towardes me.”<sup>335</sup> The earl’s direct, “humble” pleas for Queen Elizabeth’s “good grace, opinion and favor” resulted in his release from the Tower.

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<sup>333</sup> Thomas Wriothesley became Lord Chancellor and a Knight of the Garter, an honor his grandson would receive under James I. The first earl attached himself to Cromwell early on and apparently “was among the most ruthless of Cromwell’s creatures,” though, according to John Leland, he also was “always a friend to the Muses” (Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 4-5). He was named earl of Southampton after Henry VIII’s death based on an order Henry supposedly gave Secretary Paget on his deathbed.

<sup>334</sup> Pope Pius V’s bull excommunicating the queen troubled the second earl, who sought the counsel of John Leslie, Bishop of Ross (agent of Mary, Queen of Scots, in London). Southampton was espied talking with Ross and was arrested. He was placed briefly into the custody of Donne’s future in-law William More at Loseley house, but the earl’s conversation with Ross was revisited in October 1571. Southampton was re-arrested and sent to the Tower. See Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*.

<sup>335</sup> British Library MS Lansdowne 16, folio 48r.

Henry Wriothesley, junior, was born on October 6, 1573.<sup>336</sup> At the time his father finally was receiving small rewards from the queen as a result of his “loiall obedience,” though he channeled these gifts into an extravagant lifestyle that would leave his son with many debts, forcing him to rely heavily on the queen’s favors.<sup>337</sup> When the second earl was imprisoned again, this time due to the anti-recusancy act of January 1581, he apparently failed to write Elizabeth another apologetic plea. This period of imprisonment accelerated the decline of his health, and he died later that year.

Thus, just prior to his eighth birthday, Henry Wriothesley became the third earl of Southampton and a ward in Lord Burghley’s care.<sup>338</sup> While living and studying at Cecil House, Southampton surely met Burghley’s adult son Robert Cecil as well as Essex (also a ward) during a visit from Wales.<sup>339</sup> Southampton also befriended Henry and Charles Danvers and later (while attending St. John’s College, Cambridge) the earl of Rutland, another Burghley ward. Rutland and the Danvers brothers would stand with Essex and Southampton in 1601; in fact, Charles Danvers would credit his “love to the Earl of Southampton” for participation in the coup that would cost his life.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Southampton lived until November 10, 1624, when he died of a fever in Holland while bringing home his oldest son, who died just prior to his father. Both men were buried at Titchfield.

<sup>337</sup> In the late 1570s the second earl became increasingly sure that his wife and a man named Donesame were having an affair, and in 1580 Southampton broke with Anne and her family. Though the countess sent young Henry to his father with a letter protesting her innocence, the second earl refused even to read it, instead attempting to separate his wife and son.

<sup>338</sup> Lord Howard of Effingham bought Southampton’s wardship, which later should include money paid by the bride’s family upon the earl’s marriage. Howard chose to transfer the earl’s custody and marriage arrangements to Lord Burghley, into whose care Southampton came in late 1581 or early 1582 (Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 22-23). Like other Burghley wards, the earl must have received an excellent education at Cecil House. Burghley apparently maintained an active interest in Southampton’s development after the earl left for Cambridge, for, according to Honan, “In the summer Burghley kept up the argumentative emphasis by giving him Latin themes to write. Two of these survive, and although neither is very logical, Southampton lets his heart speak for him” (“Wriothesley, Henry, third earl of Southampton [1573–1624],” 516).

<sup>339</sup> Southampton and Essex’s relationship was established by the time Southampton came of age in 1594 (Rowse, *Shakespeare’s Southampton: Patron of Virginia*, 57).

<sup>340</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1598-1601*, 571. Apparently a fierce friend, Southampton harbored Henry Danvers after Danvers murdered Henry Long, who had attacked Charles. Southampton

After receiving his M.A. in 1589, Southampton joined Gray's Inn, but as the earl approached adulthood Burghley indicated that he intended Southampton to marry his granddaughter Elizabeth Vere, daughter of the earl of Oxford. Demonstrating the defiant attitude destined to infuriate the queen, Southampton refused, apparently not because he disliked Vere but because he lacked desire to marry, which has encouraged conjecture about Southampton's sexual preferences in the early 1590s and about his potential role as the young man in Shakespeare's sonnets. In response to Southampton's adamant refusal, Burghley imposed a £5000 fine when Southampton came of age in 1594, which, combined with the earl's debts and the fee imposed by the Crown for legal transfer of Southampton's lands to him, put him in dire straits.<sup>341</sup>

In spite of financial constraints, Southampton was sought as a patron of the arts, particularly in the 1590s when the young courtier seemed a rising star.<sup>342</sup> Southampton appreciated music and art, as illustrated by his numerous portraits (more than any contemporary save Queen Elizabeth), and he frequented the theater.<sup>343</sup> Southampton also admired literature, as Sir John Beaumont's elegy for the earl attests:

I keepe that glory last, which is the best;  
The loue of Learning, which he oft exprest  
By conuersation, and respect to those

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helped the Danvers brothers flee to the court in France (Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 41-46).

<sup>341</sup> Southampton's actions and attitude inspired the poetic censure of John Clapham, one of Burghley's secretaries. To gratify his patron, Clapham dedicated with tongue in cheek his tale of the self-involved (and doomed) *Narcissus* to Southampton in 1591 (Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 33-34).

<sup>342</sup> We do not know when Southampton began to attend the queen regularly, but he was at court by 1592 because John Sanford mentions him in a poem marking the occasion of Elizabeth and her court's visit to Oxford. Southampton also was considered (though not chosen) for a knight of the garter in 1593, a significant honor for one so young.

<sup>343</sup> Honan, "Wriothesley, Henry, third earl of Southampton (1573-1624)," 517.



Who had a name in Artes, in verse or prose:  
 Shall euer I forget with what delight,  
 He on my simple lines would cast his sight?  
 His onely mem'ry my poore worke adornes,  
 He is a Father to my crowne of thornes.<sup>344</sup>

Southampton made generous donations to the library of his alma mater and to the Bodleian Library, and the laundry list of printed dedications, commendatory verses, and verse epistles to Southampton suggests that authors eagerly sought his favor by association. Thomas Nashe's dedication to Southampton in *The Unfortunate Traveler* (1593)—which famously remarks, “A dere loue and cherisher you are, as well of the louers of Poets, as of Poets themselues”—also compliments Southampton's love of the arts, possibly alluding to his status as a poet: “Incomprehensible is the heighth of your spirit both in heroical resolution and matters of conceit.”<sup>345</sup> Though Shakespeare's flattery in *Venus and Adonis* (1593) reflects typical contemporary dedication discourse, his language in *Lucrece* (1594) seems intimate and affectionate: “VVhat I haue done is yours, what I haue to doe is yours, being part in all I haue, deuoted yours.”<sup>346</sup>

Southampton biographer G. P. V. Akrigg contends that Shakespeare also composed

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<sup>344</sup> *Bosvvorth-field with a taste of the variety of other poems, left by Sir Iohn Beaumont, Baronet, deceased: set forth by his sonne, Sir Iohn Beaumont* (London: Printed by Felix Kyngston for Henry Seile, 1629) (STC 1694), sig. N1v. Goodyer calls Southampton the “great example” of the important union of the arts and military prowess, for “what other than / Should loue the Arts, if not a valiant man?” (*The mirrour of maiestie* [London: Printed by William Iones, 1618] [STC 11496], sig. E2r).

<sup>345</sup> Thomas Nashe, *The vnfortunate traoueller. Or, The life of Iacke Wilton* (London: Printed by T. Scarlet for C. Burby, 1594) (STC 18380), sig. A2r-v.

<sup>346</sup> *Lucrece* (London: Printed by Richard Field, for Iohn Harrison, 1594) (STC 22345), sig. A2r. Shakespeare also testifies, “The loue I dedicate to your Lordship is without end,” adding “The warrant I haue of your Honourable disposition, not the worth of my vntutord Lines makes it assured of acceptance,” further implying a personal connection. Nichol Smith remarks, “There is no other dedication like this in Elizabethan literature” (*Shakespeare's England* [Oxford, 1916], II, 201; quoted in Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 198). Many scholars point to these lines as evidence that Shakespeare wrote most sonnets about and for Southampton.

Sonnet 107 to congratulate Southampton upon his release from the Tower, which suggests that their relationship remained intact during and after Southampton's imprisonment, highlighting the well-educated earl's sincere and ongoing interest in poetry.<sup>347</sup>

Whether or not Southampton knew many of the poets who sought his attention in print, he was connected intimately with at least a few versifiers, including his mother. Bodleian MS Add. B. 105 contains "The Resolve by Lady Mary Wriothesly" (fol. 101r), which seems to reject the "Thirst of Praise, & vain Desire of Fame" that (according to the poem) most women relish from suitors, though the speaker's catalogue of trivial flirtations reveals her vast knowledge of such desires.<sup>348</sup> The countess's second husband

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<sup>347</sup> Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 236. Perhaps Beaumont's 1624 elegy even alludes to a direct connection between Southampton and the playwright whom, just the previous year, Jonson immortalized as "not of an age, but for all time":

My verses are not for the present age;  
For what man lives, or breathes on Englands stage;  
That knew not braue Southampton, in whose sight  
Most plac'd their day, and in his absence night? (sig. M8v)

In a letter to London's *Sunday Times* (April 19, 1981), Eric Sams even advanced that the most celebrated writer for "England's stage" might have served as Southampton's secretary, though Gordon C. Cyr refuted the claim ("The Latest Shakespearean Mare's Nest: Southampton's Secretary," *The Shakespeare Newsletter* 31.168, Feb. 1981, 4). Charles A Rouse previously made a similar allegation regarding playwright Thomas Heywood, who interrupts his elegy for the recently deceased James I to offer intimations of intimacy with Southampton, for Heywood is "most in dutie bound, / Because his seruant once" (Heywood, *A funeral elegie, vpon the much lamented death of the trespuissant and vnmatchable king, King Iames* [London: Printed for Thomas Harper, 1625] [STC 13324], sig. B4v). See Rouse, "Was Heywood a Servant of the Earl of Southampton?" *PMLA* 45.3, Sept. 1930, 787-90. No substantive evidence currently suggests that Southampton employed either man, or any man regularly, as a secretary, and neither verse style nor manuscript context of "The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned" suggest composition by Heywood or Shakespeare, who lacked access to Southampton in the Tower.

<sup>348</sup> The full poem reads,

Whilst Thirst of Praise, & vain Desire of Fame,  
In ev'ry Age, is ev'ry Womans Aim.  
With Courtship pleas'd, of silly Ioasters proud,  
Fond of a Train, & happy in a Crowd.  
On ev'ry Fool bestowing some kind Glance,  
Each Conquest owing to some loose Advance.  
Whilst vain Coquetts affect to be pursued,  
And think they are Virtuous, if not grossly Lew'd.  
Let this great Maxim be my Virtues Guide;  
In part to blame she is, who has been try'd.  
He comes too near, who comes to be deny'd.

Sir Thomas Heneage, the first of Southampton's two step-fathers, also composed poems. Heneage modeled success in acquiring and maintaining Elizabeth's favor through, among other things, writing verse. For example, Heneage composed "Madam, but marke the labors of our lyfe"—extant in only one manuscript—in reply to a melancholic verse written by Queen Elizabeth, a well-known and prolific poet.<sup>349</sup> Scribal copies of both poems appear only in Pierpont Morgan Library 7768, with Heneage's autograph signature. Although Heneage probably showed his intimate verse to the queen, he did not encourage its circulation.<sup>350</sup>

Generally, having a famous author did not guarantee a poem's extensive distribution. Cecil's only extant poem remained lost until discovered by Katherine Duncan-Jones in 1992. The verse metaphorizes a known event—Queen Elizabeth's theft of his niece's miniature of Cecil in order to wear it on her shoe buckle—into an analysis of the role of a servant to the sovereign. The extant manuscript copy that Duncan-Jones

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Though, as Crum notes, the poem later was attributed to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in J. Dodsley's *Collection of Poems*, this near-contemporary manuscript attribution is more likely correct (1748, iii, p. 305; noted in Crum, *First-line Index of English Poetry, 1500-1800*, in *Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library*, Oxford, vol. 2, 1116). Much of the early part of the manuscript apparently was prepared in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but many verses in the manuscript's latter section, such as this one, probably were written much earlier and inserted. Incidentally, Stopes bases a theory regarding "M<sup>r</sup> W.H." on the countess's third husband, William Hervey. When the countess died in 1607, she left her husband many papers to sort, a job he would have taken on by 1608 while preparing for his new bride. Stopes believes that among these papers were manuscript copies of Shakespeare's sonnets, written for and about the countess's son. According to Stopes, Hervey gave the sonnets to Thomas Thorpe, who probably meant his dedication as well wishing for Hervey's marriage (*The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's Patron*, 343-44).

<sup>349</sup> See May's discussion of Heneage, as well as the texts of his poems, in *The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts*.

<sup>350</sup> In fact, "All six of Sir Thomas's known poems exist in unique copies which saw little or no manuscript circulation, nor was he referred to as a poet by contemporaries" (May, *The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts*, 61). Unlike most of Elizabeth I's favorites, Heneage "remained on closely affectionate terms with the queen almost throughout her reign" (339; see 338-43). One might wonder if Southampton followed his step-father's example in attempting to limit the circulation of his compositions. As Akrigg notes, "Arthur Wilson, who knew [Southampton] personally, and in the main admired him" regarded Southampton as guarded: "'He carried his business closely and slily', says Wilson. There seems little reason to doubt that Southampton had early learned to banish candour from certain regions of his life" (*Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 180; quoting *The History of Great Britain*, 162).

uncovered lacks ascription; she bases her authorship claim on Sir William Browne's description of the event in a letter to the earl of Shrewsbury, which originally accompanied a copy of the poem.<sup>351</sup> Browne calls these verses, sung at court by Robert Hales, "very secrett," which probably explains their lack of circulation in manuscript. However, Joshua Eckhardt's recent discovery of an additional manuscript copy ascribed to "R. C." lends considerable weight to the attribution.<sup>352</sup> Apparently, only a minority of Elizabeth's courtiers were poets,<sup>353</sup> yet several members of this small group—Cecil, Heneage, and of course Essex—were connected closely to Southampton.

Though we lack evidence that Southampton flattered his sovereign with verses in the 1590s, he desperately, and at first successfully, sought her favor (and its accompanying financial rewards). In fact, the queen's growing fondness for her young favorite threatened Essex, who in early 1595 apparently composed verses (also performed by Hales) to curtail her affection: "And if thou shouldst by Her be now forsaken, / She made thy Heart too strong for to be shaken."<sup>354</sup> Southampton's absence from court by October suggests that the queen's penchant had passed, possibly due to jealousy when he

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<sup>351</sup> Katherine Duncan-Jones, "'Preserved Dainties': Late Elizabethan Poems by Sir Robert Cecil and the Earl of Clanricarde," *The Bodleian Library Record* vol. 14, no. 2 (April 1992): 136-44. The poem appears in Bodleian MS Don. c. 54, folio 7v. Browne's letter in Lambeth Palace Library MS 3203 (fol. 36), dated September 18, 1602, discusses a miniature worn by the Lady Darby that Queen Elizabeth confiscated and used on a shoe buckle and later as a decoration near her elbow. Jones suggests that the manuscript compiler seems to reveal a pro-Essexian and anti-Cecilian bias, which might explain the poem's inclusion. In an analysis that recalls this study's previous discussion of Francis Davison, Jones notes the manuscript's inclusion of Davison's "The Counterskuffle" and suggests a potential connection between the manuscript (and its compiler, Richard ap Robert) and *Poetical Rhapsody*; she notes, "Through routes which have never been established, Francis Davison was exceptionally successful in acquiring texts of previously unpublished, yet authentic Elizabethan courtier poems" (143).

<sup>352</sup> Joshua Eckhardt, "'From a Seruant of Diana' to the Libellers of Robert Cecil: The Transmission of Songs Written for Queen Elizabeth I," in *Elizabeth I and the Culture of Writing*, eds. Peter Beal and Grace Ioppolo (London: The British Library, 2007), 115-31. Eckhardt records a copy of the poem ascribed to "R. C." in All Souls College Library, Oxford, MS 155, folio 128r (115).

<sup>353</sup> See May, *The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts*.

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*, 133 and 251. Also see May, "The Poems of Edward De Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford and of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex" (*Studies in Philology* 77.5 [1980]: 1-132).

showed more attention to Elizabeth Vernon—one of her maids of honor and Essex’s cousin—than to herself.<sup>355</sup> Curiously, the queen refused Southampton’s and Rutland’s requests to accompany Essex to Cádiz in 1596, a choice that might reflect a desire to keep fond ones close by (as with favorites in previous battles) or a punishment for some mis-step. But, during the following year, Southampton commanded a vessel to the Azores that captured another ship, offering one of the few successes of the expedition and earning the earl knighthood.<sup>356</sup>

All efforts to impress Elizabeth were overshadowed in 1598 by a series of events that led to his arguably greatest error with the queen, for which she likely harbored resentment in 1601. When Elizabeth failed to reward Southampton’s service in the Azores, he was forced in late 1597 and early 1598 to sell several properties. Probably in part to avoid financial problems, Southampton appealed to Cecil for permission to join his embassy to the court of Henri in Paris. Though initially reluctant to let Southampton go, the queen finally granted him permission on February 6, just four days prior to Cecil’s leaving.<sup>357</sup> Though Cecil returned to London in April, Southampton remained, probably in part to enjoy the company of the long-banished Danvers brothers. But

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<sup>355</sup> Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 47-48. Rowland Whyte seems to find the queen little moved by Southampton as of September 23, 1595; he writes Sir Robert Sidney, “My Lord of *Southampton*, doth with to much Familiarity court the faire Mrs. *Varnon*, while his Friends observing the Quenes Humors towards my Lord of *Essex*, doe what they can to bring her to fauor him, but it is yet in vaine” (Arthur Collins, *Letters and Memorials of State...* vol. 1 [London: Printed for T. Osborne, 1746], 348-49). Paul E. J. Hammer suggests another potential relationship (or at least a flirtation) with Lady Mary Howard. Hammer quotes J. Arnold who says that Howard “received a stern warning about her behaviour towards an unnamed earl in 1597” (*Queen Elizabeth’s wardrobe unlock’d: the inventories of the wardrobe of robes prepared in July 1600...*, 104; quoted in *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: the Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, 1585-1597* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 319, footnote 17).

<sup>356</sup> Southampton was made captain of The Garland. Though the Azores expedition was packed with failures, the earl captured a ship (supplying a tale repeatedly aggrandized in the telling). Later that year, Southampton also sat in Parliament; yet, though pulled onto many committees, he rarely attended.

<sup>357</sup> Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 68-70. On the night before leaving, Southampton and others paid tribute to Cecil with plays and banquets—Southampton’s first documented association with players.

Elizabeth Vernon was with child, and Southampton faced the choice of abandoning her or returning to marry her in spite of sure objections by his mother and his queen.

Southampton returned. In August, Charles and Henry Danvers traveled to London with a letter from Southampton to Cecil indicating that the earl awaited the return of one of the Danvers brothers to Paris, at which time they would travel to Italy. Meanwhile Southampton secretly returned to England for his clandestine wedding. The fact that Southampton lied to Cecil suggests that perhaps their friendship was not quite as secure as some have supposed.

Once the queen discovered the marriage, her response was swift and furious. Though Southampton had departed again for Paris, Queen Elizabeth demanded his return and sent Elizabeth Vernon to the Fleet. In a letter written on September 3, 1598, Cecil, somewhat reluctantly and perhaps in disappointment, ordered his friend to return to Court: "I am grieved to use the style of a councillor to you, to whom I have ever rather wished to be the messenger of honour and favour, by laying Her Majesty's command upon you."<sup>358</sup> The papers of Sir Thomas Edmondes, the English Agent at Paris 1592-1599, paint a vivid portrait of subsequent events. After informing Edmondes, "my L. of Southamptons comming hither is knowen, and what he hath done, for w<sup>ch</sup> the Queene is much offended," Cecil expresses concern that Southampton might exacerbate his own problems and offers his wish "that his Lo: should take heed to make it worse w<sup>th</sup> any contempt."<sup>359</sup> Edmondes also received a signed warrant from the queen:

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<sup>358</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1598-1601*, 90.

<sup>359</sup> British Library MS Stowe 167, folio 38r. When Cecil informed Edmondes of the queen's wishes, Cecil apparently sent a letter directly to Southampton as well. Thus, the earl knew of Queen Elizabeth's orders for quite some time before he submitted to them.

we haue vnderstoode that the Earle of Southampton hath been in England  
privily, and is passed ouer again without o<sup>r</sup> knowledge contemptuously,  
And...behaued him selfe in other thinges contrary to his duety and to the  
dishouno<sup>r</sup> of our Court. (fol. 40r).

Edmondes informed Southampton of the queen's command, to which the earl "readelie  
yealded to submitt him self thereunto, *promising to vse all possible hast to depart*";  
however, due to "some impediments he could not instantlie remoue," Southampton  
lingered, gambling and probably hoping that the queen's anger might dissipate with time  
(fol. 46r).<sup>360</sup> Southampton also wrote Cecil directly, saying that, though the earl would  
like to obey his queen, he must "attend the receipt of some money which was to be made  
over to me to carry me further...till then I have no means to stir from hence. This is  
unfeignedly true."<sup>361</sup> This concern that Cecil might doubt Southampton's honesty seems  
justified since the earl was caught so recently in a lie. Southampton even begs, "Do not  
withdraw your love from me, with the growing of my unhappy fortune."<sup>362</sup> When the  
earl returned to England in November, Elizabeth immediately sent him to join his wife in  
the Fleet, where they had a daughter Penelope. Though Essex tried to procure their  
immediate freedom, Southampton remained in prison until the month's end.

His clandestine wedding to a lady-in-waiting placed him among a prestigious club  
of favorites whose marriages had frustrated the queen, including Raleigh and the earls of

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<sup>360</sup> In this copy of Edmondes's reply to Cecil, Edmondes also claims, "I fynd his L." appears "much greved  
& afflicted that it hath ben his vnhappyne to incurre her ma<sup>tes</sup> displeasure and wishing to redeeme the same  
by anie sufferance and most humble satisfaction." We actually have no evidence that Southampton  
attempted "anie sufferance"; of course, Edmondes probably hoped Cecil would relay his report to the  
queen.

<sup>361</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1598-1601*, 100.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

Leicester and Essex.<sup>363</sup> Southampton's seemingly unforgivable error arguably lay not in his decision to marry his mistress or in his choice to do so in secret but in his behavior toward the queen. After challenging her authority through sneaking home (and then leaving again) and through remaining in Paris in spite of her command, he probably erred most when he apparently failed to put pen to paper to beg her forgiveness. No record of Southampton's penance remains—not a letter entreating her mercy, not a poem extolling her greatness, not a contemporary comment suggesting such a gesture.

Personal protestations, specifically via verse, were employed by other favorites who incurred Elizabeth's wrath for unwelcome marriages. Essex apparently composed "Muses no more but mazes be your names" to assure the queen that, though Frances Walsingham became his bride, Elizabeth remained his love.<sup>364</sup> After Queen Elizabeth discovered Raleigh's marriage to Elizabeth Throckmorton, he probably composed the "Cynthia" poems for his sovereign. These poems might reflect how close the queen kept some of her favorites' verses, for, although Raleigh's poems were popular and eagerly sought, only four poems remain extant of "Ocean to Cynthia"—originally a much longer composition, it seems.<sup>365</sup> Though out of favor for quite some time, Raleigh eventually re-

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<sup>363</sup> Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, secretly married Lettice Devereux (widow of the first earl of Essex) in September 1578, becoming step-father to the ill-fated second earl of Essex. Essex married Frances Walsingham (Sir Francis Walsingham's daughter and Sir Philip Sidney's widow) in secret; although the exact date of the wedding is not known, their marriage was recognized publicly by October 1590 thanks to her increasingly obvious pregnancy. Late in 1591 Raleigh wed Elizabeth Throckmorton, also pregnant, a marriage not discovered by the queen until the following May. She sent both Raleigh and wife to the Tower, and, although he was released soon after, he basically was banned from court until 1597 due to the queen's lingering resentment.

<sup>364</sup> May argues that among Essex's extant poems "there is little evidence of composition for its own sake or as a function of passive retirement from courtiership"; his verses constitute part of his crusade for "self-promotion at court" (125). Thus, Essex follows Raleigh in "adapting his poetry to self-serving, political ends" (*The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts*, 125).

<sup>365</sup> Titles of the extant holographs "The 21th and last book of the Ocean to Cynthia" and "The end of the books of the Ocean's love to Cynthia and the beginning of the 22nd book, entreating of sorrow" suggest that perhaps he composed a much longer epic poem. If so, it seems surprising that only four "Cynthia" poems remain, for Raleigh apparently allowed circulation of the majority of his verse. See Rudick, *The*



secured a significant role at court. Unlike Raleigh and Essex, who left a substantial canon reflecting “utilitarian poetics,” Southampton wrote Queen Elizabeth no verses. And, unlike Raleigh and Essex, Southampton found no forgiveness.<sup>366</sup>

Elizabeth admitted her lingering grudge the following year during Southampton’s service in Ireland when she refused to grant Essex’s request to make Southampton General of the Horse, an incident seemingly referred to in “The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned.” After Elizabeth forbade Essex (during a private meeting at Richmond) to grant Southampton any command in the army, Essex unwisely assured Southampton that they merely would wait until Essex obtained his commission and could appoint whichever officers he deemed worthy—a risky plan.<sup>367</sup> After Essex became viceroy and commander-in-chief on March 12, 1599, and received the sword of state in Dublin on April 15, he promptly appointed Southampton to General of the Horse. On June 10, the Privy Council sent Essex a letter demanding on behalf of the queen that he retract the command and offer it to someone else, “her M<sup>tie</sup> esteemeing it a verye vnseasonable tyme to conferr vpon [Southampton] any so great place, having so latelye giuen her cause of offence towardes hym.”<sup>368</sup> Essex refused. He informed the Council that he had taken the queen’s remarks at Richmond as a suggestion, not a command, and

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*Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh, A Historical Edition*, and May, *The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts*.

<sup>366</sup> It should be noted, though, that Elizabeth held grudges against some of her favorites (particularly Raleigh) for long periods of time. Her lack of forgiveness within the first few years of Southampton’s impasse does not guarantee that she never would have changed her attitude, had she lived longer.

<sup>367</sup> Granted, the queen objected to many of Essex’s appointments, a product of their ongoing struggle for dominance.

<sup>368</sup> British Library MS Add. 4129, folio 16v. Southampton already had experienced success in the battle, leaving Essex with a difficult choice: obey his queen—who he believed to be under the control of a dangerous court faction—against his own conscience and the reputation of his loyal friend or disobey her and incur her wrath. Queen Elizabeth’s anger might have been fanned by friends of Lord Grey at court, for Southampton quarreled with Grey in Ireland. While under Southampton’s command, Grey disobeyed an order and was punished by one night’s watch by a member of the army. Grey responded with great indignation. Grey, who would sit in judgment of Southampton in 1601, maintained an acrimonious relationship with Southampton thereafter (Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 84).

that he found it imprudent to demote Southampton after the service that he already had shown queen and country. Addressing Queen Elizabeth's intense resentment toward Southampton, Essex adds, "was it treason in my L of S. to marrye my poore kinswoman, that neither longe imprisonment, nor no punishment besydes (y<sup>t</sup> hat benn vsuall in like cases) can satisfye & appease?"<sup>369</sup> On July 19, the queen sent a frustrated response, calling Southampton "such a one whose counsel can be of little, and experience of less use."<sup>370</sup> Essex reluctantly recalled the appointment but chose, perhaps recklessly, to abolish the post altogether.

Evidently, Southampton never participated in this exchange, though at least one comrade believed that the earl should take a more active role to improve his relationship with the queen. Charles Danvers offered Southampton this advice:

*use your own pen* in such a style as is no less fit for this time than contrary to your disposition, it being apparent that her Majesty's ill conceit is as much grounded upon the sternness of your carriage as upon the foundation of any other offence.<sup>371</sup>

Danvers urged his friend to take up his "own pen" to acknowledge his contrition and loyalty to the queen in order to begin to regain her favor. However, yet again, Southampton apparently ignored his opportunity to write Elizabeth a letter of apology (in verse or in prose).

Surprisingly, in "The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned" the poet employs a metaphor involving a horse: "the horse may, / that stumbled in the morne, goe

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<sup>369</sup> British Library MS Add. 4129, folio 17r.

<sup>370</sup> *Calendar of State Papers (Ireland), 1599-1600*, 100.

<sup>371</sup> *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. The Marquis of Salisbury, K. G. preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire*, edited by S. R. Scargill-Bird et al, vol. 9 (London: 1883-1976), 246. Emphasis added. Will be referred to hereafter as *Salisbury MSS*.

well all day” (lines 7-8). One might wonder why Southampton (or another poet invoking the earl) would mention horses, reminding the queen of a situation involving both Southampton and Essex that recently enraged her as a means to plead mercy. Yet, the metaphor seems apt, for the comparison draws attention to Southampton’s recognition of past wayward actions: though he, sometime General of the Horse, “stumbled in the morne” of the February rebellion—or, more generally, throughout his youth—he promises to “goe well” hereafter. Besides,

if faultes were not, how could greate Princes then  
 approach soe neare god, in pardoninge men?  
 wisdom & valour, common men haue knowne,  
 But only mercie is the Princes owne. (lines 9-12)

Yet again, the speaker cleverly appeals to the queen’s vanity as God’s powerful representative on earth, the sole being capable of offering Southampton salvation through answering his “faultes” with Christ-like “mercie.”

Perhaps Essex and Southampton sought “mercie” as well when they left Ireland in 1599 against the queen’s wishes. Essex intended to respond to Elizabeth’s scathing letter concerning his consultation with Tyrone, but, when the queen called Essex to answer charges, the Privy Council found him guilty and imprisoned him at York House.<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> While at York House, Essex—who likely met Donne, Egerton’s secretary—apparently composed a letter addressed to Southampton, encouraging his friend to become more devout. One of many manuscript copies of the letter, printed in 1642, appears in MS Stowe 276 (fols. 3v-4v). In “A cōpye of a letter from the Erle of Essex to the Erle of Southampton,” Essex claims to have experienced an “vnfayned conversion” (fol. 4r) and has given himself completely to God. He begs Southampton to emulate his choice: “ffor though your eies were neuer so longe shutt they must be open at last & then yo<sup>w</sup> must saie w<sup>th</sup> me. There is no peace to the vngodly: I will make a Coven<sup>a</sup>nte w<sup>th</sup> my soule not to suffer mine eies to sleepe in this night nor my thoughtes to attend the first busines of the daie till I haue praied to my god that your Lo: maye beleue and make proffitt of this plaine but faithfull admonition” (fol. 4r). Essex signs the letter, “your Lo: Cosen & trewe ffreind whome no worldly cause can diuide from yo<sup>w</sup>” (fol. 4v), a testament to their intimate friendship.

During Essex's captivity, Southampton remained in residence at Essex House, and he and Rutland supposedly "passed away the Tyme in *London* merely in going to Plaies euery Day."<sup>373</sup> When Essex's trial was canceled eventually, Southampton and friends celebrated, but Essex remained under strict house-arrest. Southampton and company blamed this fate on an anti-Essex faction, which increasingly concerned them. Essex's sister (and Sidney's Stella) Penelope warned the queen about the ill intentions of the faction—supposedly led by Cecil and consisting of Raleigh, Cobham, Grey, and others—which she contrasts with her brother and Southampton,

two of them, perishing by their employments in their own country, where they would have done you service to the shedding of their best and last blood, if they had not been wounded behind to death, by the faction that care not on whose necks they unjustly build the wall of the their own fortunes; which I fear will grow more dangerous high than is yet discovered.<sup>374</sup>

In an effort to return to Elizabeth's good graces, Southampton asked the queen in March 1600 for permission to resume his duties in Ireland. Though he repeatedly requested to appeal to Elizabeth personally, Southampton received only her written permission to leave, and he did on April 21. He proved a fine warrior for England yet again under his friend Lord Mountjoy, who requested that Southampton be granted governorship of

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<sup>373</sup> Collins, *Letters and Memorials of State*, 132 (in a letter from Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sidney, dated October 11, 1599). According to some, Southampton attempted (but failed) to convince Essex to flee to France (Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 98-99).

<sup>374</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Addenda 1580-1625*, 398-99. A marginal note in the original manuscript indicates that the "two" are Essex and Southampton. Rich supposedly wrote this letter in November 1599, while Essex still was imprisoned at York House before returning home in March 1600, though under house arrest. Rich adds that the Cecilian faction's sinister desires will grow "if God does not hinder the work, (as the Tower of Babel), and confound their tongues that understand one another too well."

Connaught, hoping that “these sacrifices may expiate great sins.”<sup>375</sup> Southampton appealed to Cecil for assistance in the scheme, but apparently Cecil’s efforts (if any were made) proved unsuccessful, for yet again the queen denied the earl’s request. Thus, frustrated and disappointed, Southampton wrote on July 22 to inform Cecil that, “sorry Her Majesty thinks me so little able to do her service,” he intended to leave for the Low Countries in the hopes of better fortune.<sup>376</sup> By late September, the earl had returned to London, soon to make the error that nearly would cost his life.

### ***Southampton’s Trial and Prison Protestations***

The events leading up to and comprising Essex’s failed coup on February 8, 1601, are well documented, as is Essex and Southampton’s February 19 trial in Westminster Hall. Even Donne alludes to the events in *Catalogus Librorum Aulicorum*.<sup>377</sup> But a few elements of the trial, as reported in manuscript (and eventually printed) accounts, demand special attention. Particularly relevant are Southampton’s language and attitude, such a marked contrast to his prior haughty demeanor that one might wonder if Attorney-

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<sup>375</sup> Mountjoy writes Cecil from Dublin on June 8, 1600, “Out of my affection I can name no man that I love better than the Earl of Southampton, neither out of my judgment any one whom I think the queen should bestow the government thereof to more purpose for the service. Except it were by taking all occasions to serve her, to redeem her favour, I know it is a place he would not seek” (*Calendar of State Papers [Ireland]*, 1600, 223-24). Southampton confirms this notion in a letter written to Cecil the next day; he requests Cecil’s assistance but admits, “It is a place, I protest unto you, I am nothing greedy of, neither would I at all desire it, but in hope by that means to effect somewhat whereby to recover Her Majesty’s good conceit, which is my only end and all the happiness I aspire unto” (*Calendar of State Papers [Ireland]*, 1600, 231).

<sup>376</sup> *Calendar of State Papers (Ireland)*, 1600, 328.

<sup>377</sup> A letter to Goodyer reveals that Donne revised his satiric catalogue of books, and Donne mocks Francis Bacon in the early version (prior to receiving patronage from Bacon’s sister Lady Drury) in book-title 27, which in translation reads, “The Brazen Head of Francis Bacon: concerning Robert the First, King of England” (Evelyn M. Simpson, *A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948], 156). According to Simpson, Donne refers to Attorney-General Edward Coke’s indictment of Essex at trial: “According to Camden’s *Annals*, Coke ended his speech with this sharp conclusion: ‘It were to be wished that this Robert might be the last of this name Earle of Essex, who affected to be Robert the first of that name King of England’” (156-57).

General Edward Coke intended the pun when criticizing Southampton's "misdemeanour" of late, for which "it hath pleased [Queen Elizabeth] to thinke worse of him."<sup>378</sup> Though Essex proclaimed his innocence, insisting that he only had wanted to "make his passage to the Queene, to prostrate himself to her Ma<sup>tie</sup> to informe her of the mallice & practices of his enemies,"<sup>379</sup> Southampton tried another tactic: claiming ignorance. He somewhat disingenuously maintained that he was unaware of a planned march on the palace and that he only accompanied Essex to preserve his friend from adversaries. After being convicted unanimously of treason, Southampton and Essex were offered opportunities to speak before sentencing. Though Essex announced his Protestantism, loyalty, and remorse, he accepted his doom; he did not expect, nor adamantly implore, the queen's mercy. Southampton, on the other hand, passionately entreated his judges

to inform the Queen of my penitence, and be a means for me to her Majesty to grant me her gracious pardon. I know I have offended her; yet if it please her to be merciful unto me, I may, by my future service, deserve my life. I have been brought up under her Majesty, I have spent the best part of my patrimony in her Majesty's service, with frequent danger of my life, as your Lordships well know....But since I am found guilty by the law, I do submit myself to death, yet not despairing of her

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<sup>378</sup> Quoted in Stopes, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's Patron*, 208. Stopes indicates that she gathered these remarks from a manuscript owned by a Dr. Smedley. Stopes says regarding the rebellion, "Everyone knows the pitiful story, every historian and letter writer of the period record it more or less fully" (206-7). Although Francis Bacon wrote *A Declaration of the Practices & Treasons attempted and committed by Robert late Earle of Essex and his Complices* (London: Printed by Robert Barker, 1601) "to justify the Queen and the Council in the eyes of the people," many contemporary accounts favor the earls.

<sup>379</sup> British Library MS Add. 4155, folio 96r. This manuscript contains one of many contemporary accounts (fols. 94-97).

Majesty's mercy; for I know she is merciful, and if she please to extend  
mercy to me, I shall with all humility receive it.<sup>380</sup>

His regret and self-loathing, his adulation of his "merciful" sovereign, his promise to  
make himself a model servant of the queen—all of these elements, as previously  
mentioned, appear in the "The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned":

life w<sup>ch</sup> I now begg, wer't to *proceede*  
from els whoso'er, I'd first chowse to bleed

but now, the cause, why life I doe Implore  
is, that I thinke you worthy to giue more. (lines 67-70)

Though the speaker acknowledges that his crimes merit the "iustice" of his death, he begs  
forgiveness from his queen for she is "worthy to giue more," mirroring Southampton's  
declaration that he would "with all humility receive" mercy (if offered) and "by my  
future service, deserve my life."

Southampton's trial speech, extant in a number of seventeenth-century manuscript  
and printed sources, evoked mixed reactions. Contemporary historian John Speed  
reported that the combination of Southampton's "sweet temper...well deseruing life" and  
Essex's resolve "did breed most compassionate affections in all men."<sup>381</sup> John  
Chamberlain, on the other hand, offered qualified criticism of Southampton's meekness:

The earle of Southampton spake very well (but me thought somewhat too  
much as well as the other) and as a man that wold faine live pleaded hard  
to acquite himself, but all in vaine, for yt could not be, wherupon he

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<sup>380</sup> Quoted in Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 126.

<sup>381</sup> *The historie of Great Britaine...by Iohn Speed* (London: Printed by Iohn Dauuson, for George Humble, 1631) (STC 23048.5), 1213.

descended to intreatie, and moved great commiseration, and though he  
were generally well liked, yet me thought he was somewhat too low and  
submisse, and semed too loth to die before a prowde ennemie.<sup>382</sup>

But becoming “low and submisse” seems to have been what the queen desired.

According to Charlotte Carmichael Stopes, during the following year Queen Elizabeth even admitted to an envoy of King Henri, “if Essex had only taken the advice of his friends and fully submitted and entreated pardon, [Elizabeth] would have forgiven him.”<sup>383</sup> In truth such forgiveness seems unlikely, for (whatever their motives or intentions) the Essex rebels committed actions deemed treasonous, and Essex led the charge. As second-in-command, Southampton stood in great danger, but his desire to live prevailed over his pride, for the earl humbly recognized (like the poem’s speaker) that “perseuerance in ill, is all the ill” (line 7).

During the following month, Southampton took up his “own pen” at least four times in the Tower to reiterate and expand on his courtroom pleas in two letters addressed to the Council, a confession, and a letter to Robert Cecil—all extant in the papers of Hatfield House.<sup>384</sup> Quite unlike Southampton’s previous, rather impersonal epistolary

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<sup>382</sup> *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman Egbert McClure, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939), 120.

<sup>383</sup> Quoted in Stopes, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare’s Patron*, 246. Rowse also remarks, “he would not sue for mercy to the Queen, and that decided his fate” (*Shakespeare’s Southampton: Patron of Virginia*, 161).

<sup>384</sup> Stopes reproduces three documents: a letter to the Council, a document called Southampton’s confession, and a letter to Robert Cecil, each labeled as “after Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> 1600-1” in *Salisbury MSS (The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare’s Patron*, 225-31). Another letter to the Council is printed in full in *Salisbury MSS*, XI, 73. These letters and statements contribute significantly to our understanding of events surrounding James I’s potential role in the Essex uprising. For example, Southampton reveals that Essex wrote King James “to discredite the faction (as he termed it) contrary vnto him” (quoted in *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare’s Patron*, 230) and to ask James to send the earl of Marr with directions on how to proceed. Essex received an epistolary response from James, which “was it he ware in the blak purse about his necke” (230). Southampton also admits to writing James, “professinge my self to be willinge to doe him seruice, as farr as I mought with my



style, his writings from this period reflect a desperate and (quite rightly) frightened penitent.<sup>385</sup> Surely these anxious, earnest outpourings were fueled by the executions of Essex and fellow conspirators and by persistent whispers surrounding Southampton's impending doom.<sup>386</sup> When encouraging the queen to pardon Southampton to "deceiue the sprightes / of people, curious after roofull sightes" (lines 35-36), the poetic speaker probably alludes to the mobs that gathered on various days in response to rumors of Southampton's execution, such as the crowd that swarmed Tower Hill on Lady Day.<sup>387</sup> Memories of his father's imprisonment in the Tower must have haunted Southampton; although the queen repeatedly had shown the second earl mercy, she repeatedly was disappointed by his actions. Now the son was for all practical purposes a dead man as well or, as the speaker suggests, a man "dead in law" (line 28): contemporary documents, which follow the common practice regarding condemned prisoners, refer to Southampton as "the late Earle."<sup>388</sup> In its regretful, anxious tone, its topics, and even its language, "The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned" recalls Southampton's February 1601 pieces—apparently known only to the queen and her Council.

Naturally, in his Tower statements Southampton reiterates themes from his trial speech, though his language appears more repentant and desperate. Like the poem's speaker, Southampton lowers himself, announcing I "with so humble and greeued a spirit

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alleageance to her Majestie, and by the messengers sent him woord that in this course I would assist him with my endeauors and my person" (227).

<sup>385</sup> In fact, Stopes laments the difficulties of writing a biography of Southampton because "he did not pour forth his heart readily in effusive letters" (*The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's Patron*, v).

<sup>386</sup> Essex was executed in the Tower courtyard on February 25. A trial was held for Essex's steward Gelly Merrick and secretary Henry Cuffe, Sir Christopher Blount, Sir John Davies, and Sir Charles Danvers on March 5. All were found guilty, though Davies was reprieved. Merrick and Cuffe were hanged and quartered in public; Danvers and Blount were beheaded on Tower Hill (Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 128).

<sup>387</sup> Rowse records this event, as does Akrigg, who claims that by March 25 the queen already had commuted the sentence (*Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 131).

<sup>388</sup> Rowse, *Shakespeare's Southampton: Patron of Virginia*, 164.

prostrate my self att her royall feete and craue her pardon.”<sup>389</sup> He repeatedly promises that a pardon would result in his lifelong, faithful service—a recurring theme in the poem, as previously discussed. Assuring the Council that he never would solicit the queen’s pardon had he ever allowed “unreverent thoughts towards her Majesty,” Southampton announces, “God that knows my heart is my witness that it is loyal and faithful towards her, and therefore I cannot but be confident in her *mercy*,” a word repeatedly mentioned in his Tower writings and in the poem.<sup>390</sup>

Southampton’s written petitions for “mercy” often point to an issue absent in his trial speech but highlighted in the poem: the queen’s singular ability to substitute mercy for justice, an act that Southampton attests will raise her in God’s favor. “Beleeue that God is better pleased with those that are the instrumentes of mercy,” he says, “then with such as are the persuaders of severe iustice, and forgett not that hee hath promised mercy to the mercifull.”<sup>391</sup> In another letter Southampton assures the Council that forgiveness will not cause Elizabeth to appear weak or the crime to appear insignificant to the public: “The law hath hetherto had his proceedinge, wherby her iustice and my shame is sufficiently published; now is the time that mercy is to be shewed.”<sup>392</sup> The poem’s speaker repeatedly pairs the queen with Christ, champion and embodiment of mercy—the “antidote to iustice” (line 13).

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<sup>389</sup> Quoted in Stopes, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare’s Patron*, 225.

<sup>390</sup> *Salisbury MSS*, XI, 73. Emphasis added. In another statement, Southampton echoes this thought: “O lett her neuer sufer to bee spiled the bloud of him that desiers to live but to doe her seruice, nor loose the glory shee shall gaine in the world by pardoninge one whose harte is without spott, though his cursed destiny hath made his actes to bee condemned, and whose life, if it please her to graunte it, shallbe eternally redy to bee sacrificed to accomplish her least comandement” (quoted in Stopes, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare’s Patron*, 225-26).

<sup>391</sup> Quoted in Stopes, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare’s Patron*, 225.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

Also like the poem's speaker, Southampton plays upon the sovereign's vanity in his Tower writings. He praises her "harte, which I know is apt to receaue any impression of good."<sup>393</sup> And, in a phrase that accentuates his rhetorical training through revealing aptitudes for creating metaphors and for displacing blame, Southampton asks the Council to

be a mean to her Majesty to be merciful to him upon whom in his own conceit the sun never shined since he was banished her presence; for if it had been permitted unto me to have lived so as I might but sometimes have seen the light of her eyes, I know this misfortune could never have befallen me.<sup>394</sup>

He assures the Council, "her anger...towards an humble and sorrowfull man...alone hath more power to dead my spirites then any iron hath to kill my flesh,"<sup>395</sup> introducing a comparison involving "iron," much like the poem's speaker who equates the debasing of his celebrated eyes with an iron blade cooling:

my face w<sup>ch</sup> greife plowed, & mine eyes when they  
stand full like two nine-holes, where at boyes play  
and so their fires went out like Iron hott  
and put into the forge, & then is not. (lines 39-42)

The queen, aware of her own aging body, surely could identify with the speaker's concern for his fading beauty and youth. Southampton, man of many portraits, must have mourned his "*partes* afflicted" (line 38), particularly his handsome face: "And in the wrinkills of my cheekes, teares lie, / like furowes fild w<sup>th</sup> rayne, & no more drie" (lines

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<sup>393</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>394</sup> *Salisbury MSS*, XI, 73.

<sup>395</sup> Quoted in Stopes, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's Patron*, 226.

43-44). Yet, like Southampton's Tower writings, the poem maintains a sense of hopeful expectation for both parties. The speaker acknowledges decay and death in "the Ma<sup>tie</sup> of a Prince, where all thinges end" (line 62)—a line that simultaneously observes that the queen is the all-powerful "end" but that her life, like "all thinges," will "end." However, the speaker jars the reader in the following line with "and beginn:" (line 63). He reiterates that, though "the Prince" can punish, "the Prince" also can forgive, and Christ (from which all things "beginn") rewards such mercy. The remainder of the line clarifies the worldly prince's "sacred" duty: "by whose sacred prerogatiue / he as he list, we as we ought liue" (lines 63-64). "Sacred" both flatters the sovereign and connects "the Prince" with the Prince of Peace. As Southampton similarly remarks to the Council, "it is more honor to a prince to pardon one penitent offender, then with severity to punish mayny."<sup>396</sup>

In addition to topical and thematic connections, specific verbal echoes of Southampton's Tower writings surface in the poem. Like "mercy," "prince" recurs, as demonstrated above. Though contemporary references to Elizabeth as a "prince" exist, they prove relatively uncommon, yet Southampton throws himself "att her Majesties princely feete, with a trew penitent sowle for my fautes past, with horror in my conscience for my offences."<sup>397</sup> The earl's statement recalls another term from the poem—"horror." The prisoner is haunted during sleepless nights: "horroure, & feare, like cold in ice, dwell heare; / and hope (like lightninge) gon ere it appeare" (lines 57-58). The speaker's desire for "new merrittes" (line 2) also reflects Southampton's contemporary pieces, and the title, "The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned. to *Queen Elizabeth*," includes a term that Southampton employs: "I beseech your

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<sup>396</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid., 229.

Lordships bee pleased to receaue the petition of a poore *condemned* man.”<sup>398</sup>

Admittedly, “horror” and “condemned” might seem commonplace in a poem depicting Southampton’s dire circumstances, but there are other examples of repetition. The cumulative connections between the poem and prison writings appear more than coincidental.

Far from commonplace is the speaker’s mention of his ailing legs. In a March 22 letter to Sir John Peyton, Lieutenant of the Tower, the Council states, “wee doe understand that the Earle of Southampton by reason of the continewance of his quartern ague hath a swellinge in his legges and other partes”; thus, “you maie admytt Doctor Paddy whoe is acquainted with the state of his bodie in your presence to have accesse unto him, and to conferr with him.”<sup>399</sup> The letter recalls Elizabeth I’s severe restrictions on Southampton’s visitors; neither his wife nor mother was admitted to visit for many months and then only due to his failing health. Southampton’s poor health was recognized publicly,<sup>400</sup> which arguably could account for the speaker bemoaning his suffering body and failing appetite:

I w<sup>th</sup> eatinge doe no more ingrosse

then one that playes smale game after greate losse,

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<sup>398</sup> Ibid., 225. Emphasis added. Southampton suggests that he originally planned to go into the Low Countries in the hopes that his fortunes would improve, “as by my meritt hir Majestie should hold me worthy” (227). Further connecting his monarch and his Maker, Southampton reminds the queen that God is merciful and that his release will allow for increased recognition of her own merits: he prays that “the God of Mercy...will moue her Majestie to pyty mee, that I may lyve to make the world know her great meritt and serue her” (229).

<sup>399</sup> *Acts of the Privy Council of England, 1600-1601*, vol. 31, 237-38.

<sup>400</sup> King James even discusses Southampton’s deplorable health in prison: “the place is vnholysome and dolorous to him, to whose bodie and minde wee would giue present comfort Intendinge vnto him soe muche farther grace & fauor” (British Library MS Add. 33051, fol. 53). Southampton seemed to worsen in August, when his mother and estate representatives were granted permission to visit, and then again in October, when the queen finally gave his wife permission to visit (*Acts of the Privy Council of England, 1601-1604*, vol. 32, 175 and 256.) Southampton’s ailing “armes” (line 45) are mentioned in the poem as well, but mainly to demonstrate the earl’s remorse, for the poet suggests that Southampton’s arms hurt from pounding his chest in penance.

is like to gett his owne. (lines 51-53)

Yet, the speaker calls attention to an issue apparently not widely known, Southampton's failing "legges": "I'ue left my goinge since my legges strength decayd / Like one, whose stocke beinge spent giue ouer trade" (lines 49-50). Not even poets who professed to know the earl—such as John Beaumont, Gervase Markham, and Donne's friend Henry Goodyer—mention this ailment in printed verses on Southampton. This reference reflects awareness of a medical concern probably known only to Dr. Paddy, the Privy Council, Queen Elizabeth, and Southampton, enhancing the case for the earl's authorship.

Southampton's letter to Cecil proves particularly intriguing among his Tower writings, for Southampton's language reveals anxiety regarding his old friend's intentions. After he acknowledges, "I receaued a charge from you and the rest of the Lords, when I last spake with you, that I should conceale the matter which was in hand," which indicates that Cecil did converse with Southampton in the Tower, the earl nervously adds that he discovered that "the Lieuetenant" knows a good deal about "the matter" (most likely Mountjoy's role in Essex's uprising).<sup>401</sup> Apparently terrified that suspicions could damage his relationship with Cecil, Southampton avers that he told the lieutenant nothing. He then acquaints Cecil with other elements of the "coup" that he claims to have remembered recently, acknowledging that "my cheef hope is in your desier to effect my good, next vnto the fauor of God and the mercy of her Majestie."<sup>402</sup> Southampton further claims,

I doe rely so much vppon your fauor that I doute not but you will make  
vse of them for my aduantage, and I shall continew bound vnto you, as I

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<sup>401</sup> Quoted in Stopes, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's Patron*, 230.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

protest I doe account my self alre dy, more then to any man lyuinge, which  
whether I liue or dy I make the world know to your honor.<sup>403</sup>

These remarks could contribute to arguments that Cecil aided his friend, thus adding to the likelihood that the poem represents a persona piece. Or this profession of devotion, which seems uncharacteristically intimate, nervous, and perhaps disingenuous considering Southampton's recent actions, could reflect his fear that the queen's closest advisor may not do all in his power to assist him, a concern that could have led Southampton to put his own pen to paper.

Cecil had various reasons to encourage the queen to spare Southampton.<sup>404</sup> In addition to being a ward of Cecil's father and a long-time friend, Southampton was a popular public figure, particularly admired by his correspondent King James VI of Scotland. Based on Southampton's joyous reaction to news of the queen's death, the earl apparently expected that James eventually would free him.<sup>405</sup> Cecil might have hoped that intervention would earn the respect and appreciation of the people and of their future monarch, who might otherwise bear a grudge against Cecil for Essex's demise. Lord Henry Howard adds weight to this possibility through declaring that the politic Cecil

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<sup>403</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>404</sup> Rowse attributes Cecil's eagerness to help in part to his desire to keep hold of real friends while attempting to maneuver the transition from one monarchy to another, suspicious that he was surrounded by jealous, untrustworthy people (*Shakespeare's Southampton: Patron of Virginia*, 164). Akrigg also attests to the strength of Cecil and Southampton's friendship: "[Cecil] had his friendships, even if they were temperate and a little distant, and one of them was with Southampton...Cecil no doubt shook his head over the follies of Southampton's younger years, but he seems to have kept a lingering affection for him. When he could help Southampton he did so" (*Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 152).

<sup>405</sup> In a letter entitled "The death of Queen Eliz<sup>th</sup> & the Proclamation of K. Iames" (MS Stowe 150, fol. 180r), "Thomas fferrers" (fol. 181r) tells his brother Sir Humphrey Ferrers of the reaction of "the Erle of Sowth Hamton" in the Tower: he "walke vpon the leades in the tower, where he perceaved the proclamation to be mad, at w<sup>ch</sup> he did much reioce as great reason he haith so to doe, throwing his hatt vp towe severall tymes and the therd tyme cast ytt over the wall from him, that all vpon the tower hill might behold ytt" (fol. 180r). I am grateful to Steven May for making me aware of Katherine Duncan-Jones's discussion of this manuscript in "'Almost always smiling': Elizabeth's Last Two Years," in *Resurrecting Elizabeth I in Seventeenth-Century England*, eds. Elizabeth H. Hageman and Katherine Conway (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), 45.

saved Southampton's life "out of respect to his affection to King James, though it were neither ancient nor very meritorious."<sup>406</sup> However, Cecil also had reason to worry that, if Southampton lived, he might oppose Cecil under James. Though Southampton became the king's constant companion, receiving honors and gifts, the earl never held a strong political position, a fate that Arthur Wilson (who knew and approved of him) attributes to Cecil: "*Salisbury* kept him at a bay, & pinched him so by reason of his relation to old *Essex*, that he never flourished much in his time."<sup>407</sup>

Perhaps Cecil felt moved by the epistolary pleas from Southampton's wife and mother, letters that betray nervousness regarding Cecil's intended course. Elizabeth's first of two anxious letters, dated circa February 19, begs Cecil to carry her "humble petitions to His holy anointed," though the queen still holds her and her husband in "heavy disfavour."<sup>408</sup> Southampton's wife flatters Cecil, "easily in your wisdom can you look into my woeful condition, which *if* you be pleased to do, I doubt not but you will

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<sup>406</sup> *The Secret Correspondence of Sir Robert Cecil with James VI, King of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Printed for A. Millar, 1766), 189 (from Letter XII, "Lord Henry Howard to King James").

<sup>407</sup> *The history of Great Britain...by Arthur Wilson* (London: Printed for Richard Lownd..., 1653) (Wing W2888), 161. In 1604, Southampton's wife had a second child whom they named Anne after the queen, the child's godmother (*Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 140). Southampton frequently accompanied the king on hunting visits to Royston, so much that the earl acquired a residence nearby in Shelford Parva, Cambridgeshire (140). According to Akrigg, Cecil's role in frustrating Southampton's ambitions was not a product of Cecil's animosity toward the earl, but of Cecil's devotion to the King: "If Cecil, for all his liking for Southampton, felt that he had too much of his old impetuosity and emotionality to make a good minister, it was not disloyalty to Southampton but simple fulfillment of his duty to the King to let James know as much" (*Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 153). But Cecil's motives might not have proven so altruistic. According to Akrigg, "Sir Anthony Weldon in his scandal-mongering *Court and Character of King James* (London, 1650), p. 41, says that Cecil, to prevent Southampton becoming the royal favourite, played on the King's jealousy"; Akrigg counters (without sound support), "In referring thus to Cecil, Weldon must be mistaken" (*Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 141, note 1). Edmond Malone also blames Southampton's problems on Cecil (in quite animated language): "By the machinations of lord Essex's great adversary, the earl of Salisbury, (whose mind seems to have been as crooked as his body,) it is supposed King James was persuaded to believe that too great an intimacy subsisted between lord Southampton and his queen; on which account, (though the charge was not avowed, disaffection to the king being the crime alleged), he was apprehended in the latter end of June, 1604; but there being no proof whatsoever of his disloyalty, he was immediately released" (*The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*, vol. 20 [S.I.: Rivington (and others), 1821], 443).

<sup>408</sup> *Salisbury MSS*, 11, 71. Emphasis added.



pity me, and allow of this I do,” seeming as insecure as her husband about Cecil’s intervention. On February 19, after learning of the trial verdict she petitioned Cecil,

I do beseech you and conjure you by whatsoever is dearest unto you that you will vouchsafe so much commiseration unto a most afflicted woman as to be my means unto her sacred Majesty...Oh! let me, I beseech you, in this my great distress move you to have this compassion.

Her uncertainty regarding Cecil’s “compassion” is echoed by Southampton’s mother, who blames her son’s participation in the rebellion on his prior failures to regain the queen’s favor: “It appeared to me many times his earnest desire to recover her Majesty’s favour, his doleful discontented behaviour when he could not obtain it, how apt despair made him at length to receive evil counsel and follow such company.”<sup>409</sup> Sounding much like her son, the countess reminds Cecil that he maintains the power to save Southampton: “as God hath placed you near a prince, so help to move her Majesty to do like a God whose mercy is infinite.”<sup>410</sup>

Whatever his motivation, Cecil—the queen’s most trusted counselor in 1601 (as discussed in Chapter Two)—probably intervened in some way for Southampton.<sup>411</sup> After the queen’s death, the countess writes Cecil, “no alteration of time or fortune (that is far from you) can make me forget my bond to you for me and mine, who under God breathe

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<sup>409</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>411</sup> Akrigg, discussing their early years, remarks, “Southampton and Robert Cecil would be both adversaries and friends in the years that lay ahead. One day it would lie with Sir Robert Cecil whether or not Southampton should die with Essex on the scaffold” (*Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 27). Rowse declares, “Southampton’s life had really been saved by Cecil” (*Shakespeare’s Southampton: Patron of Virginia*, 164). While Cecil might have intervened for purely benevolent reasons, he likely expected some sort of compensation for his assistance—perhaps in the forms of information, assurance of position under James I, or even money.

by your means.”<sup>412</sup> Other “evidence” comes from Cecil’s letters, though most comprise epistles sent by the politically savvy Secretary to Southampton’s friends. When discussing Cecil’s intervention, biographers refer to his lament that “the man that grieveth me to think what may become of him, is the poor young Earl of Southampton, whom, merely for love of the Earl [of Essex], hath been drawn in to this action.”<sup>413</sup> Yet, Cecil makes this remark in a letter to Lord Mountjoy, Southampton’s close friend and fellow conspirator in some Essex activities, certain to be relieved that Cecil appears conciliatory. Cecil does remind Mountjoy that, although hope remains, Southampton probably will die, for “most of the conspiracies were at Drury House, where he was always chief”; thus “those that would deal for him, of which number I protest to God I am one, *as far as I dare*, are much disadvantaged of arguments to save him.” Even while easing back into favor with one of Southampton’s dearest friends, Cecil admits hesitation in pleading adamantly for the earl. Cecil seems less concerned about Southampton in other letters, including one addressed to George Carew prior to the trial. With no apparent remorse, Cecil announces, “I thinke by the tyme my l[ett]res shall come vnto you, both [Essex] and the Erle of Southampton, with some other of the principals, shall haue lost their heads.”<sup>414</sup>

Cecil had many motives for tempering his intervention on behalf of Southampton. First, relations between Cecil and Southampton’s family, especially the countess, were often strained, as they had been for Burghley. In a letter of August 1595 concerning

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<sup>412</sup> *Salisbury MSS*, XII, 562.

<sup>413</sup> *Calendar of State Papers (Ireland), 1600-1601*, 201. The earl of Nottingham wrote Mountjoy also, promising that he and Cecil were working hard to procure Southampton’s release: “we use all our power and wits for it” (quoted in Stopes, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare’s Patron*, 232).

<sup>414</sup> This letter appears in *Letters from Sir Robert Cecil to Sir George Carew*, written “From the Court at Whytehall this 10 of February, 1600” (ed. John Maclean [Camden Society, 1864], 66).

Heneage's debt to the crown upon his death, the countess calls Cecil a great "enemy" who she believes "took the present occasion to pour forth your malice, which we must bear and desire no better."<sup>415</sup> Cecil also might hold a grudge regarding Southampton's treatment of Cecil's cousin Sir Henry Neville, for Southampton's confession that Neville knew of the coming rebellion and consented to involvement sealed Neville's fate: he was arrested and remained in prison until released alongside Southampton.<sup>416</sup> But beyond family frustrations, Cecil doubtless remained furious about Southampton's public accusations during the trial that Cecil intended the Infanta to succeed the queen.<sup>417</sup> Discussing succession at all was dangerous under Elizabeth, but discussing a Spanish succession and possibly even accepting Spanish gifts of gold could have cost Cecil everything had he not convinced the court of his innocence. Thankfully for him, the accusations of traitors carried little weight. Akrigg argues that Cecil must have felt grateful to Southampton for providing a means for Cecil to refute the accusation publicly.<sup>418</sup> Yet, this scenario seems unlikely, for, after numerous attempts to aid his volatile friend, Cecil must have felt severely betrayed by Southampton. As the trial

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<sup>415</sup> *Salisbury MSS*, V, 475.

<sup>416</sup> Stopes, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's Patron*, 229-30.

<sup>417</sup> Essex and his supporters became convinced that Cecil, Raleigh, and Cobham were in league with the Spanish to put the Infanta on the throne. In a long letter written in Christmas 1600, Essex and company informed King James that they would take on this injustice. Essex claimed at the trial that Southampton told him that a privy councilor informed Southampton of Cecil's plans for the Infanta. Cecil insisted that Southampton name the accuser; the earl named William Knollys, who was summoned. Knollys denied the accusation. Yet, according to Stopes, the charges against Cecil might not have been unfounded considering that Cecil received a pension from Spain throughout James's reign and possibly earlier (*The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's Patron*). Hammer suggests that, as the court's most vocal supporter of James's claim to the English throne, Essex was positioning himself to be James's most trusted counselor—a fact that significantly influenced other court members' opinions regarding succession: in fact, "If Essex had not been driven to his own destruction in February, 1601, some of his rivals at court might have been forced to back another candidate for the throne (as Essex had believed they were doing) in order to protect themselves from the revenge they feared would follow an Essex-engineered Stuart succession" ("Royal Marriage and the Royal Succession," in *A Concise Companion to English Renaissance Literature*, ed. Donna B. Hamilton [Blackwell Publishing, 2006], 70).

<sup>418</sup> Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, 130.

progressed, the conspirators' goal to remove Cecil and company from Elizabeth—possibly through force, even death—became clearer, which likely incensed Cecil further against his sometime comrade. In his confession, Southampton even admitted that Essex sent Charles Danvers to Ireland to persuade Lord Mountjoy (unsuccessfully) to help “remooue from about her Majesties person those which weare bad instrumentes.”<sup>419</sup> Whether or not Cecil actively intervened for Southampton, the earl had reason to fear that Cecil—one of the primary “bad instrumentes”—would not do so, offering ample motive for Southampton to compose his own appeal.

Though long believed Southampton's “savior,” perhaps Cecil offered less direct intervention than has been suggested, becoming instead what Southampton most needed: a messenger to deliver a personal plea. Southampton faced a situation similar to that of his father and of Raleigh; both fallen men lacked access to the queen. As the elder Southampton gave his written petition to William Cecil to deliver, Raleigh apparently sent his “Cynthia” poems to Robert Cecil “to dispose of as he saw fit.”<sup>420</sup> However, their discovery at Hatfield House makes one wonder if Elizabeth ever beheld them. Perhaps Cecil proved a more reliable envoy for his old friend Southampton.

If Southampton composed the poem labeled “The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned” while in prison, he followed the example of past prisoners like his father, Raleigh, and Essex in occupying his time and consoling himself through writing. Even Elizabeth once kept busy by versifying on a wall while imprisoned by Queen Mary in Woodstock Palace, writing “Fortune, thy restless, wavering state” in 1555 as a

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<sup>419</sup> Stopes, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's Patron*, 228.

<sup>420</sup> May, *The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts*, 132. Cecil failed to deliver at least one letter that Essex entrusted him to give the queen. In fact, Cecil kept many of Essex's papers, which (like Raleigh's “Cynthia” poems) were found at Hatfield House.

“remonstrance against fortune.”<sup>421</sup> In 1580, Sir Arthur Gorges composed a lyric while imprisoned at Marshalsea for fighting with Lord Windsor in the Presence Chamber in order to move Elizabeth to pardon his mistake.<sup>422</sup> Essex also composed prison lyrics to encourage Elizabeth’s forgiveness for his marriage and spent his last days, supposedly even his final evening, in the Tower writing “The Passion of a Discontented Minde,” presenting her with a last assurance of devotion in his characteristic style among poems addressed to the queen: “straightforward, unembellished expression of personal sentiment.”<sup>423</sup> Prisoners condemned to death frequently composed lamentations in the form of poems and passionate letters during the night before execution, and this literary convention proved popular in manuscript collections. Raleigh, for example, was credited with several pre-execution poems, though only “Even such is Time who takes in trust” seems legitimate.<sup>424</sup> Prior to Raleigh’s and Essex’s executions, Babington plot conspirator Chidioc Tichborne composed a poem just before his 1586 execution that became widely copied in manuscripts, in which he laments, “My glass is full, and now my glass is run / And now I live, and now my life is done.”<sup>425</sup>

Southampton could have followed Essex’s example, not only by entreating his monarch’s mercy via verse but by doing so through the “straightforward, unembellished

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<sup>421</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid., 106, note 6.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid., 125. May says that Essex composed the poem, by far his longest, at some point during his final four days of life (250). The composition of lyrics in order (at least in part) to petition for freedom did not end with Elizabeth’s death, for John Hoskyns also wrote verses to beg King James to release him from prison (Louise Brown Osborn, ed., *The Life, Letters, and Writings of John Hoskyns 1566-1638*). On June 7, 1614, Hoskyns spoke in Parliament about James’s Scottish friends, “who consumed both king and kingdom in insolency and all kind of riot” (38). After Hoskyns was imprisoned, he wrote Latin verses for James as a New Year’s gift to plead for his release. James failed to respond favorably (43-44).

<sup>424</sup> Raleigh also wrote a well-known, deeply affectionate letter to his wife Bess late in 1603 when (after his conviction for treason) he expected execution. However, James commuted Raleigh’s sentence on December 9, leaving him a Tower prisoner. Earlier that year, Raleigh had composed another farewell letter to Bess just prior to an attempted suicide on July 27.

<sup>425</sup> Anthony Babington wrote a letter directly to the queen to beg forgiveness for his treasonous actions. She received it and declined his plea.

expression of personal sentiment” found in “The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned.” Adherence to Essex’s example also could explain the absence of additional manuscript copies of the poem, for Essex’s poetry “was confined to a most exclusive court circle, so exclusive it would seem as virtually to smother his reputation as a poet.”<sup>426</sup> Were it not for scant and in some cases singular manuscript copies of prison poems, some versifiers would be unknown, which heightens the importance of each copy’s manuscript context.

***“The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned. to Queen Elizabeth” in its Manuscript Context***

Southampton had multiple motives for placing his fate in his own hands through writing his queen an intimate, apologetic verse petition. Yet, the earl’s legendary plight also presents a scenario ripe for another poet to compose a persona piece (by which I refer to works fictionally attributed to specific persons, living or dead). Although consideration of the one known extant copy within its manuscript context may not reveal its history, such study provides the clearest picture currently available. First, the poem received ample attention from the original scribe (and perhaps a subsequent reader), for minor mistakes have been corrected.<sup>427</sup> Also, as discussed in Part I above, MS Stowe 962 probably was owned by a historian from Essex—perhaps with a particular interest in the earl of Essex. The manuscript’s contents suggest that the compiler possessed awareness of Essex’s uprising and supporters, such as Cuffe and Rutland. Potentially, the original

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<sup>426</sup> May, “The Poems of Edward De Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford and of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex,” 21.

<sup>427</sup> For example, “stumbley” has been corrected to “stumbled” in “the horses may, / that stumbled in the morne, goe well all day” (lines 7-8).

compiler maintained interest in Southampton in particular, for “Vpon the degradinge of Chancello<sup>r</sup> Baron *per* parliament: A<sup>o</sup> 1621” denounces the 1621 Parliament, in which Southampton’s remarks led to his only other brief imprisonment. Though many contemporary manuscripts suggest interest in Essex and his men, such attention explains in part this compiler’s inclusion of a rare poem by (or supposedly by) Southampton.

The poem is one of only four verses afforded special attention in margins of the carefully prepared index.<sup>428</sup> The scribe singles out “A farewell to the world,” attributed to Sir Kenelm Digby, perhaps demonstrating special knowledge of the prominent courtier—the verse’s most likely (though not widely recognized) author. Yet, the scribe also draws focus to the poem assigned to Lord Walden, whose authorship seems doubtful, though in need of further study. This seeming mistake could suggest inattention but more likely reflects the scribe’s desire to highlight verses in the manuscript composed by poets of a certain rank and station, for he also calls attention to King James’s elegy for his queen, almost certainly correctly attributed.<sup>429</sup> The scribe acknowledges the Southampton poem as one of the manuscript’s four most important verses, an unlikely choice if he or the compiler believed it to be a persona piece.

The manuscript seems, in fact, to lack a single identifiable persona poem, and persona pieces frequently appear in clusters. For example, manuscript letters that present an imagined exchange between Philip Sidney and Penelope Rich appear in Bodleian MS Eng. poet. f. 9 (fols. 224-36) as a unit.<sup>430</sup> Seeming persona pieces also surface in print:

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<sup>428</sup> On folio 250r, “+ L<sup>rd</sup> Southampto” has been added beside the entry for the poem; the name’s final “n” probably does not appear due to page trimming.

<sup>429</sup> The scribe fails, however, to draw attention to Queen Elizabeth’s poem, perhaps because he did not realize that the accompanying initials (“E.R.”) represent “*Elizabeth Regina*.”

<sup>430</sup> See Josephine A. Roberts, “The Imaginary Epistles of Sir Philip Sidney and Lady Penelope Rich,” *English Literary Renaissance* 15.1 (Winter 1985): 59-77. “The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned. to *Queen Elizabeth*” lacks formal elements associated with the fictional Sidney/Devereux

Donne's *Valour Anatomized in a Fancie* is attributed slyly to Sidney, the ultimate model of "Valour," in *Cottoni Posthuma* (1651) and followed by *Sir Francis Walsingham's Anatomizing Of Honesty, Ambition, and Fortitude*, also likely attributed ironically.<sup>431</sup>

Although Donne's prose paradoxes, problems, and two characters—works that circulated frequently with *Valour Anatomized in a Fancie* (more often called "An Essaie of Valour")—appear in MS Stowe 962, Donne's essay does not. Persona poems in Northamptonshire RO I.L. 4344 give voice to Essex as well: "Worthy Instructions to his Sonne now Earle of Essex," for example, begins "O thou lawfull bloud, my onely sonne."

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verse exchange—modeled, it seems, on Michael Drayton's *Englands Heroicall Epistles*, which drew inspiration from Ovid's *Heroides*. For example, there is no short prose argument providing the historical context, nor are there concluding annotations after each work. Other similarities between the fictional Sidney/Devereux letters and Drayton's letters that are not found in the poem include "a brief laudatory account of the individual's ancestry," "abundant use of *sententiae*, epigrams, and pithy antitheses," and "colloquial simplicity" (60). "The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned. to *Queen Elizabeth*" does, however, mirror the verse form (rhyming couplets) associated with the genre.

<sup>431</sup> *Cottoni Posthuma: divers choice pieces of that renowned antiquary Sir Robert Cotton* (London: Francis Leach for Henry Seile, 1651) (British Library E.1243), 321-40. This collection of Cotton's tracts was printed posthumously by his son, and the essay appeared with a poem called "Wooing-stuffe" that begins "Faint Amorist: what, do'st thou think," also attributed to Sidney. A shorter version of the essay first appeared anonymously in the eleventh edition of *A Wife* (1622) as "An Essaie of Valour" (*Sir Thomas Ouerbury his VVife. With additions of nevv characters, and many other wittie conceits neuer before printed* [London: Printed (at Eliot's Court Press) for Laurence Lisle, 1622] [STC 18913], sigs. Q6r-R1r). Following the 1651 printing, John Donne, junior, printed the essay attributed to his father the next year (*Paradoxes, problemes, essayes, characters, written by D<sup>r</sup> Donne Dean of Pauls: to which is added a book of epigrams: written in Latin by the same author; translated into English by I: Maine, D.D. As also Ignatius his Conclave, a satyr, translated out of the originall copy written in Latin by the same author* [London: Printed by Thomas Newcombe for Humphrey Moseley, 1652] [British Library 1340 A 17], sigs. D12v-E4r). Simpson has suggested a logical reason for its publication in the Cotton volume: "Evidently Sir Robert Cotton had possessed a transcript of Donne's essay, and this was found among his papers after his death, and by some accident Sidney's name was appended to it. There was no justification for ascribing it to Sidney; its cynical, anti-chivalrous tone is characteristic of Donne, and quite foreign to Sidney" (*A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne*, 135, footnote 1). Dennis Flynn, however, convincingly argues that Donne's essay was attributed to Sidney not by mistake but purposefully and playfully ("Three Unnoticed Companion Essays to Donne's 'An Essay of Valour,'" *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* LXXIII [Sept. 1969]: 424-39). Although Peters's edition relegates the work to dubia, manuscript evidence supports Donne's authorship. The essay appears in at least four additional extant seventeenth-century manuscripts: Derbyshire Record Office MS D258/7/13/6 (vi), a collection that includes Donne's paradoxes, characters, and essay (recently discovered by Beal); a privately owned volume of Donne's poetry and prose; Harvard MS Eng. 966.6 (generally known as the Stephens manuscript); and Mostyn Tracts Collection MS E205, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas Libraries. The latter seems to offer a version of the 1651 "Sidney" text, but the other manuscripts lend weight to Donne's authorship. My current investigation of Donne's short prose in seventeenth-century manuscripts attends primarily to MS D258/7/13/6 (vi), which also includes a treatise by Francis Bacon and a hitherto unknown work related to the 1597/8 Middle Temple revels.



If the Southampton poem represents an ascribed persona piece, it apparently comprises the sole example of this mode among the manuscript's 254 folios. The compiler and scribes of MS Stowe 962 could have included the verse without recognizing it as a persona poem, but, as discussed, they prove particularly careful and knowledgeable in their ascriptions, only attributing select poems and almost always correctly.

Though the manuscript's general accuracy, especially regarding ascriptions, points to Southampton's likely authorship, the relative obscurity of the lyric could add credence to the persona poem argument. One might expect that a verse epistle composed by such a famous public figure for such a famous recipient in such famous circumstances would have been hunted vigorously by collectors. Yet, limited copies remain of many lyrics once popular in manuscripts. In some cases, we lack manuscript copies altogether of poems known to have circulated, such as Shakespeare's "sugred Sonnets," which passed "among [Shakespeare's] private friends."<sup>432</sup> Southampton wrote Queen Elizabeth at least one direct petition in 1601 now lost, perhaps because she kept it close: in August, the earl enclosed with the Tower Lieutenant's letter to the Council a personal request for his mother and estate supervisors to attend him. Unlike many previous appeals, this handwritten plea was granted, affording proof that at least one of Southampton's personal petitions to the queen was delivered successfully.<sup>433</sup> As previously noted, existence of only one known manuscript attribution can and often does prove sufficient. Neither provenance nor textual "quality" proves the sole method for determining a manuscript's

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<sup>432</sup> Francis Meres made this well-known comment in 1598. See Brian Vickers's discussion in *Shakespeare, A Lover's Complaint, and John Davies of Hereford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>433</sup> Sir John Peyton sent a letter to the Privy Council on August 18; in their August 19 reply, the Council refers to a petition that the earl composed for the queen, in which he requests to see his mother and others. Apparently, the petition was enclosed with Peyton's August 18 letter, yet both Peyton's letter and the reply are preserved while Southampton's letter to Elizabeth is not. The queen must have kept it close, for it moved her enough to change her longstanding policy and to grant his request.

authority, for close investigation can sometimes reveal authority within the artifact itself. This artifact affords no reason in itself to doubt the single attribution of “The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned.”

### ***Conclusions***

While extant evidence offers no conclusive answer regarding authorship of “The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned. to *Queen Elizabeth*,” the case for the earl’s authorship seems strong. If authorial, the verse epistle attests to the existence of yet another Elizabethan courtier poet, an important literary and historical figure who composed a poem in order to convince his sovereign to comply with his proposed course of action: to pardon a convicted traitor. Her decision to commute his sentence could reflect Southampton’s persuasive rhetoric, not a conciliatory political maneuver or Robert Cecil’s counsel—a fact that could inform our understanding of both men, as well as their relationships with each other and with their queen. Until additional copies of the poem (if any exist) come to light, we can say safely that the only known version appears in a manuscript of considerable authority. MS Stowe 962’s compiler and scribes—rarely inaccurate—never proffer attributions without reasonably sound justification and call special attention to this poem in the manuscript’s meticulously prepared first-line index. Study of the contextual artifact alters the argument, for, if misattributed, “The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned” proves an anomaly.

Investigations of collections like MS Stowe 962 can modify critical paradigms regarding Renaissance literary culture. Like the examination of “Psalme 137” within original artifacts, this study challenges modern perspectives on Renaissance verse of unclear authorship, while illuminating a charged historical moment—one that Donne

seems to address in *Metempsychosis*. Study of Donne's poems within extant manuscripts enriches our understanding of early modern English readers and readings, attributions and

"authorship," and the company his works kept, including a verse likely composed by the earl of Southampton.

## Illustrations

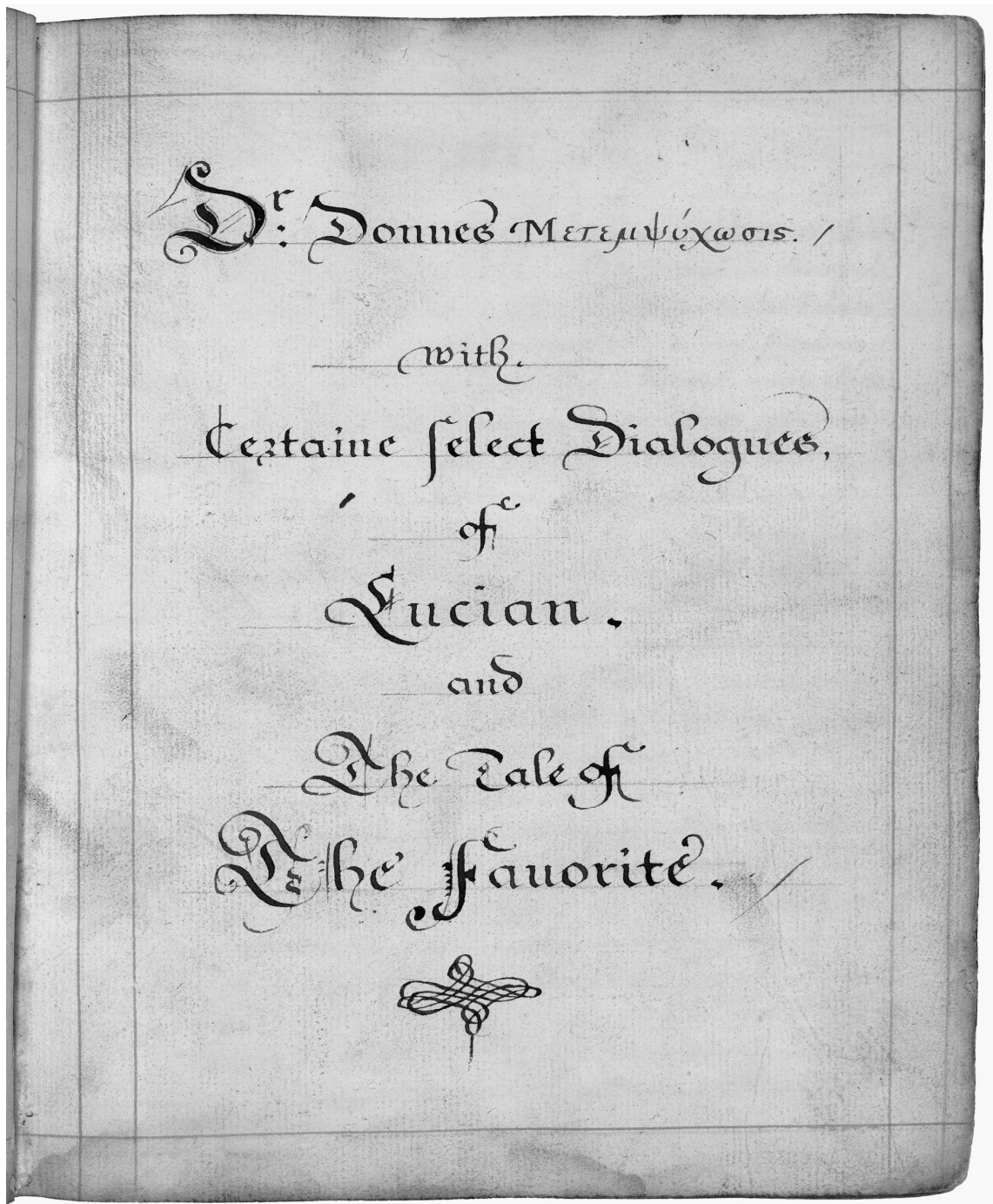


Plate 1: Title-page of the manuscript volume: Washington, D.C., Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V. a. 241, fol. 2r. Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Another part became the well of Sence,  
the tender welavind feeling brame, from whence,  
Those sinewy strings which doe our bodies tie.  
are ravelld out; and fast thereby one end,  
Did this Soule Limms thre Limms a Soule attend.  
and now thry ioynd; keeping some qualitie  
of every past shape the knew Trecherie,  
Rapine, Deceipt, and Lust, and Ills, mough.  
to be a woeman Threemch she is now  
Sister and wife to Came, Cam that first did plow.

Who ere thou beest that readst this Sullen writt,  
Whick iust so much Courts thre as thou Courts it  
Let me arreast thy Thoughts Wonder with me,  
Why Ploughing, building, ruling and the rest  
or most of those Arts, whence our liues are blest:  
by Curfed Cains Race inuented be,  
And blest Seth next vs with Astronomie  
thre's nothing Simplic good, nor ill alone,  
of every qualitie Comparison,  
the only Measure is and fudge Opinion.

Plate 2: Final stanzas of *Metempsychosis*: Washington, D.C., Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V. a. 241, fol. 16v. Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

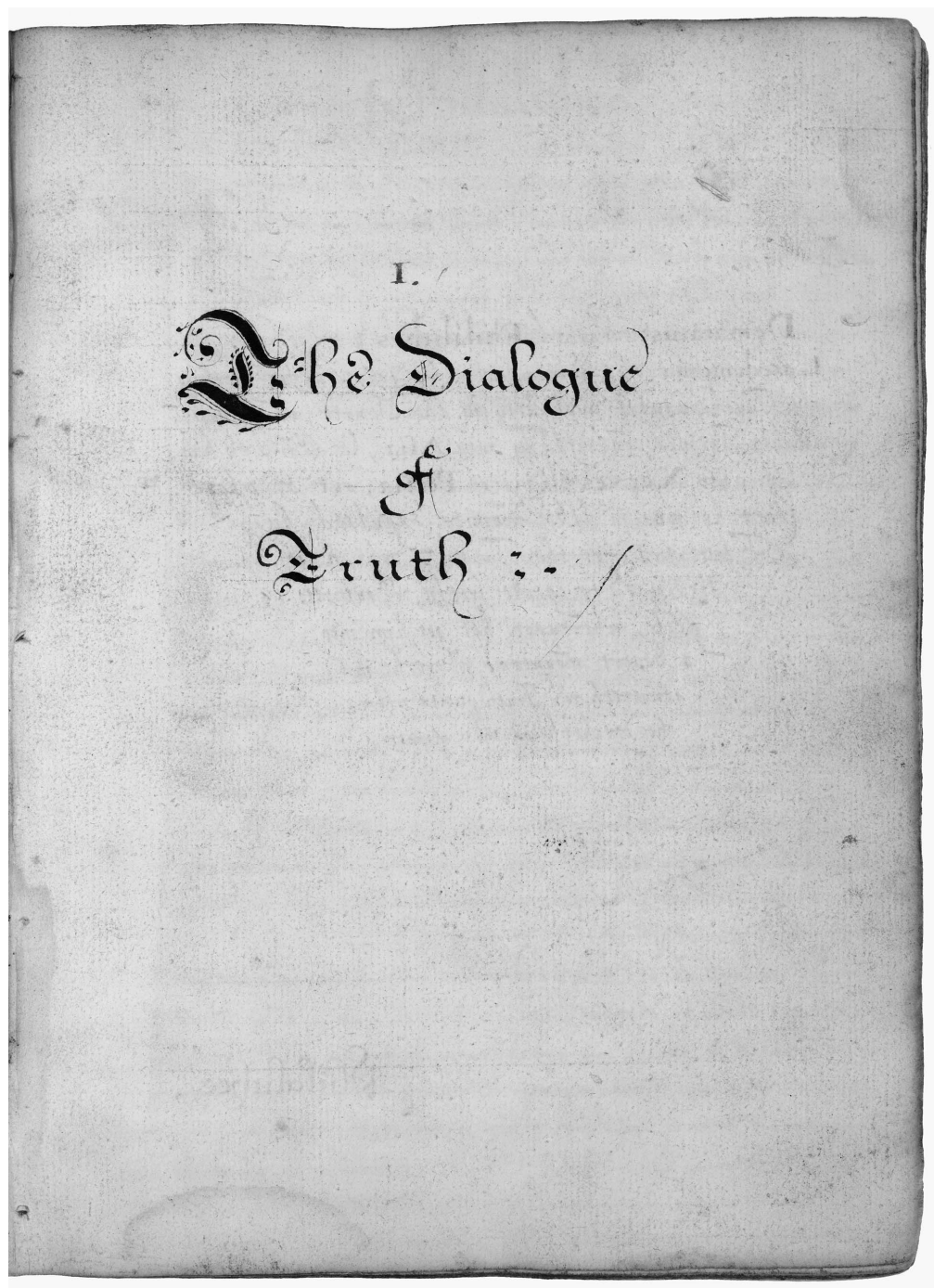


Plate 3: Title-page for the first dialogue: Washington, D.C., Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V. a. 241, fol. 17r. Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Demaratus surnamed Philalithes, a Noble man of  
Lacedemona, was driven out of his Country, for speaking  
the Truth, as well publickely, in the Senate, as priuately  
to his Friends, and flying into Asia, he addrested him-  
selfe unto Xerxes King of Persia; out of whose  
Court he was in like manner expulsed by  
Flatterers for the Truth, which he  
still used to speake freely, w<sup>th</sup> out res-  
pect, wherupon he got him into  
a desert mountaine, where he in-  
countred w<sup>th</sup> Truth, unto whom  
he speaketh in this manner.

Philalithes.

Plate 4: Argument for the first dialogue, set out on a separate page (unlike subsequent arguments which are written on the initial page of each dialogue): Washington, D.C., Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V. a. 241, fol. 17v. Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.







gate, guided to Pluto by Phlegian Lake, burning Phlegion, and the  
 Cocytus: Cerberus, and all the pains of the damned, and the words of  
 that Sibyl, who offered to admit thee at no gain to descend into the  
 Hells. **Tru.** If Hades will not receive me, if out of the Labyrinth  
 the Gods be driven, and if here also be possessed by my conscience,  
 no other way to fly from my pursuit. **Phi.** From all men thou art  
 refused away, and I likewise am by them abandoned for thy sake, were  
 I not to come to thy house wouldst be ruled by me. **Tru.** No more.  
**Phi.** Thou hast heard how I am all alone, no other than a god  
 dead, and feeding thee from the Gods, I have a word, but not a quiet  
 life, with me now I desire thou wouldst remain: here with me, and going  
 and my food, and drink, and sleep, no other of my kindred are desired by  
 Lungs. The God who is of the Gods is my drink; and that  
 no other of my kindred is desired by me, I have always content: here  
 I have no more pain, nor am I ever disturbed with sleep. Here the  
 singing of the Lutes supply the defect of thyself the Lutes, and my Lutes  
 are delighted with the various beauties of the Lutes in place of  
 Gods, and people, so much admired of the Gods. The Gods are my Lutes,  
 and the Gods my drink, no other of my kindred is desired by me, so be thou do  
 not disdain me. **Tru.** No, it is the Gods of a sound and sound, the  
 words of the Gods. No other of my kindred is desired by me, I have always content: here  
 and no other of my kindred is desired by me, I have always content: here  
 finding to comfort me. **Phi.** Come, let us go to the Gods, for the Gods are  
 ready. **Tru.** Lead thou the way, and I will follow thee.



Plate 6: Final page of the first dialogue: Washington, D.C., Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V. a. 241, fol. 23v. Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

In this Dialogue **Lucian** introduceth  
**Timon**, who thorough his prodigallitie  
 being become poore, and afterwards  
 forsaken of his friends complai-  
 neth of Ioue as of one y<sup>e</sup>  
 sleepeeth and that puni-  
 sheth not y<sup>e</sup> ungratefull.

2.  
**Timon.**

O freindly, hospitall, sociable, domestick Ioue, thou Vri-  
 dent of caters, Congregator of Cloudes, Thunderer, Lightner,  
 or by what other name soeuer thou art called upon by sin-  
 ler's Votter; especially when they hath matter in their works,  
 for thou, by multitude of thy named thou upboldest thy  
 radiant uirgin, and suppliest thy defect of the Time; where  
 is now thy roaring thunder, thy flashing lightnings, thy bur-  
 ning, and terrible bolts? all these things, sure, are become  
 fables, a uerie poetiuall fume, no other then a mistie gomme  
 of words. Thy thunderbolts w<sup>ch</sup> in times past, were so ready  
 and swift for fauour of, are now soe slacke, and in subse-  
 quence extinguished, so there resteth not soe much as a  
 sparke of Corate in them ag<sup>st</sup> Malefactor; soe that one w<sup>ch</sup>  
 is about to doe some euill act, standeth in more feare of a  
 smiting snuffe of a Candle, then of thy lightnings, w<sup>ch</sup>  
 heretofore kept all thy world in awe. It seemeth that thou  
 art become both blind, and deafe, otherwise thou  
 wouldest not be soe regardles of mistred men; for when thou  
 wast young, thou wouldest show thy wrath and indignation,  
 putting

Plate 7: Initial page of the second dialogue: Washington, D.C., Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V. a. 241, fol. 24r. Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

109.  
 higher to Athens, where he left me. Thus hast thou  
 heard the particulars of my journey, but also what a  
 fearful Fustion the Gods have taken. Friend. I  
 Memnonus, it is a fearful one indeed, but I will go direct  
 to the Philosophers, and give you warning of the danger  
 they are in.



## The Fable of San Fox.

In this Tale, or Discourse following, the Author  
 endeavours to delineate the impotent Love, that some  
 Princes (though otherwise vertuous men) bear to  
 their undeserving Favorites, and sometimes to the  
 hazard of their owne estates. Friendship contracted  
 with unequall Natures, hath often a foule exit,  
 and nothing is safer to maintaine societie, then  
 equalitie. For, Subjects over-hastilie raised by  
 their masters Love, do often abuse that favour, &  
 either are taken by their fortunes, or do take: and  
 Kings againe when they descend into that lowne of fa-  
 miliaritie, w<sup>th</sup> ill naturts, the unfaithfulness of those,  
 they have raised turnes either to subversion of their  
 makers: or the envie of others, who aspire to the like  
 dignitie, supplanteth them. So y<sup>e</sup> the danger of the Favorite  
 is commonly in extremes, either to perish by disgrace; thro-  
 ugh envie; or suffer destroyed ruine w<sup>th</sup> infamie.

Plate 8: Conclusion of the Lucian dialogues and the argument of the fable (erroneously paginated 109 instead of 100): Washington, D.C., Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V. a. 241, fol. 67v. Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

110

*In the time* of the Saxon Heptarchie, in England,  
 there was a King and Queene of Mercia, or the Mid-land,  
 who were both not onlie renowned, for their eminent vertues, and  
 beautie, but more for their mutuall and inherent loue. And to  
 the King, who was a younge and artie Prince, it seem'd not  
 happinot enough, to enjoy so excellent a Queene, except he  
 would also furnish himselfe of affaimes, or flauorite, to whom  
 hee might trust and communicate, his dearest, and most priuate  
 affaires. It happed, that not long after, rather by affection  
 then Iudgme<sup>t</sup>, he lighted vpon a Norman Gentleman, -  
 named San' Foy; a man of a faire promising outside, but  
 who had nothing left within to make it good, but a fine flatt-  
 ery, and courtlie falsehood. In him the good King, not only  
 took into his most secret Counsell, but diuided with him all  
 the Arcana of his Soule, and Soueraignitie; and more to  
 bind him with fauor, would into giue those secrets, w<sup>ch</sup>  
 euen soone discovered his deprau'd nature. Now as a Sorcerer  
 who had the power, to transforme himselfe, as often as he  
 would, into any other Creature, in the instant of time: and  
 deadning his owne bodie, could make his spirit liue in another;  
 he withdrew him one day, into his Chamber, (where among  
 many other priuaries) he taking him by the hand, said -  
 San' Foy, I would see thee now a Sorcerer, w<sup>ch</sup> I neuer  
 communicated with any Soule, but my best beloued Queene  
 neither, till I saw thee, durst I euer imagine another best  
 worthie or capable of it; but heere, from whom I can  
 hide nothing, thou shalt receiue it. Thid it is, obserue,  
 and marke it. And therewith drawing forth of his pocket  
 a Paper =

Plate 9: First page of the fable (erroneously paginated 110 instead of 101): Washington, D.C., Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V. a. 241, fol. 68r. Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

## Appendix 1

Following are additional descriptive details for Folger MS V. a. 241. The manuscript, pp. [34] 1-100, 110-111 [2], contains the collation [a]<sup>12</sup>[b]<sup>4</sup>[c]<sup>6</sup>(+[c]<sub>7</sub>)[d-o]<sup>4</sup>(+[o]<sub>5</sub>)[p]<sup>4</sup>.<sup>434</sup> Its margins are ruled in a sepia ink in folios containing *Metempsychosis* but not in those containing the first dialogue; another form of sepia ink frames the remainder of the manuscript. Folios 1-16 contain one upper margin 13mm from the paper edge, one lower margin 14mm from the paper edge, and two marginal indicators on each side: 12mm and 22mm from the binding and 6mm and 15mm from the paper edge. Folios 24-68 contain one upper margin 22mm from the paper edge, one lower margin 10mm from the paper edge, two marginal indicators on the inner side 12mm and 22mm from the binding, and one marginal indicator on the outer side 46mm from the page edge. There is also a quite faint marginal indicator of darker ink 8mm from the paper edge. There are horizontal chain lines on all leaves: chain lines are approximately 30mm apart in folios 1-23 and approximately 26mm apart in folios 24-68 and the three endleaves. Chain lines are not distinguishable in folio 69. Although watermarks are difficult to discern in some sections, the watermark present in folios 1-23 is a circle, while the watermark in folios 24-68 is a large coat of arms.<sup>435</sup> This coat of arms contains an eagle, crown or castle, and lion rampart. The book was rebaked: its original brown calfskin boards have a simple blind tooling of triple-lined fillet around the border made by an

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<sup>434</sup> Absolute certainty regarding the collation of the manuscript is complicated by its delicate nature and its tight binding, but this formula provides the likely collation.

<sup>435</sup> C. M. Briquet labels the watermark 2291 (*Les Filigranes Dictionnaire Historique des Marques du Papier*, vol. 1 [New York: Hacker Art Books, 1966; reprint]). Edward Heawood lists it among “Coat of Arms” as 481 (*Watermarks Mainly of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries* [Hilversum, Holland: Paper Publications Society, 1950]).

egg/oval head roll. The spine reads “D<sup>R</sup>. DONNE’S METEMPSYCHOSIS.— M. S.”  
tooled in gold letters within a dotted tooling around the border made by a gilt pinhead  
rope and an anthemion-crowned floret stamp at the top, with evidence of one at the  
bottom.<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>436</sup> J. Franklin Mowery of the Folger Shakespeare Library kindly provided this description of the manuscript binding.

## Appendix 2

The prefatory argument (fol. 67v) and the tale (fol. 68r-v) from Folger MS V. a. 241 are printed with permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library. The transcription from secretary script is mine.

### The Fable of San 'Foy.

In this Tale, or Discourse following, the Author endeuors to delineate the impotent loue, that some Princes (though otherwise uertuous men,) beare to their undeseruing Fauorites, and sometimes to the hazard of their owne estat's. Freindship contracted with unequall Natures, hath often a foule exite, and nothing is safer to mainteine societie, then equalitie. For, Subiects ouer-hastilie raised by their masters Loue, do often abuse that fauour, & either are taken by their fortunes, or do take: and Kings againe when they descend into that lownes of familiaritie, w<sup>th</sup> ill natures, the unfaithfulnes of those, they haue raised turnes either to subuersion of their Makers: or the enuie of others, who aspire to the like dignitie, supplanteth them. So y<sup>t</sup> the danger of the Fauorite is commonly in extreemes, either to perish by disgrace; through enuie; or suffer deserued ruine w<sup>th</sup> infamie.

In the time of the Saxon Heptarchie, in England, there was a King and Queene of Mercia, or the Mid-land, who were both not onlie renowned, for their eminent vertues, and beautie, but more for their mutuall and inherent loue: And to the King, who was a younge and actiue Prince, it seem'd not happines enough, to enioy soe excellent a Queene, except he could alsoe furnish him selfe of a ffreind, or ffauorite, to whom hee might trust and



*communicate*, his dearest, and most priuate affaires. It hapned, that not long after, rather by affection then Iudgem<sup>t</sup>, he lighted vpon a Norman Gentleman, named San 'Foy; a man of a faire *promising* outside, but who had nothing left within to make it good, but a fine flattery, and courtlie falsehood. Him the good King, not only tooke into his most secrett Counsell, but diuided with him all the Arcana of his Soule, and Soueraign'etie; and more to bind him with fauo<sup>rs</sup> powr'd into him those secretts, w<sup>ch</sup> eft soone discover'd his deprau'd nature. ffor as a Prince who had the power, to transforme himselfe, as often as he would, into anie other Creature, in the instant of time: and deading his owne bodie, could make his spirit liue in another; hee withdrew him one day, into his Chamber, where (among manie other priuacies) he taking him by the hand, said San 'Foy, I could shew thee now a secrett, w<sup>ch</sup> I neuer *communicated* with anie Soule, but my best beloued Queene, neither, till I saw thee, durst I euer imagine another brest worthie or capable of it; but thine, from whom I can hide nothing, thou shalt receiue it. This it is, obserue, and marke it. And therewith drawing forth of his pocket / a Sparrow, hauing shutt all the doores, the king laid himselfe vpon the floore, on his back, his face upwardes, and bade him feare nothing. Then stifling the bird, he putt the dead bill into his mouth, and breath'd upon it. Instantlie the Kings bodie became cold, and a Carkasse, whilst the sparrow begun to pipp, and hopp about the Roome, and San 'Foy amazed with the suddaine Reuiuall of the bird, now sitting on his head, then on his shoulder, then flying about the chamber chirping, then hoppng upon his hand, at length, returning to the dead King, and inserting his bill, in his cold lipps, restor'd his borrow'd Soule, and fill'd the emptie veines, with the first spiritts. San 'Foy, astonish'd at the Sight, humbly begg'd of the King the knowledge, and key of the Secrett. Hee as willing to grant, as the other was



to aske it, bade him lie downe in the same manner as he saw him to doe before, and giuing him an herbe to chaw in his mouth, and laying another within his brest, held the dead Sparrow to his Mouth, and will'd him to breath thereon. San 'Foy, fearlessly did it; when the bird began to take ioy in his bold flight, fiue or six times about the roome, and at last returning to the Carkasse of San 'Foy, animated it againe. That by daily participating, and practising this Secrett, hee grew more and more into the kings bosome, and vnder concealement of his owne to-be-abhorred Mischeife, he putt on the Maske, or vizor of a most obsequious seruant. ffor within hee was soe possessed with the thirst of soueraigntie, and the lust of enioying the Queene, his mistresse, as the onlie hope of his safetie, was to make good his trecherie, in the highest degree; and by a new varietie of Manners, and a confus'd temper of vices to come forth in one, and the same person, an appearing freind, and a most cruell enemie. See now, I pray yow, whether the furious lusts, or the frantick desires of the Ambitious, will transport the guiltie?

### Appendix 3

“Psalm 137” in MS Add. 25707 (fols. 16v-17v) is printed by permission of the British Library. The transcription is mine. This text is not offered as an edition but as an example of the poem in manuscript, though I include major verbal variants found in all known seventeenth-century manuscript and printed versions of the text, for which I offer the following sigla (including those provided by *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* if available): British Library MS Add. 27407 (B27407), British Library MS Add. 29427 (B29427), British Library MS Harley 3357 (B3357), British Library MS Harley 6930 (B6930), Cambridge University Library MS Add. 29 (C1), Bodleian MS Eng. misc. e. 13 (Oe13), Bodleian MS Rawlinson Poet. 61 (ORawl61), Bodleian MS Rawlinson Poet. 117 (O34), Bodleian MS Tanner 466 (O44), 1633 *Poems*, British Library 239.1.32 (A), 1635 *Poems*, British Library 1076 a.12 (B), 1639 *Poems*, British Library 1076 a.37 (C), 1649 *Poems*, Bodleian Library Vet. A3 f.410 (D), 1650 *Poems*, British Library 011641 de.102 (E), 1654 *Poems*, British Library 11623 aa.8 (F), 1669 *Poems*, British Library 011641 de.103 (G).

#### Psalm 137.

By Euphrates flowry side

we did bide

From dear Iuda far absented

Tearinge y<sup>e</sup> ayre w<sup>th</sup> our cries

& our eyes	5
w <sup>th</sup> y <sup>eir</sup> streames his stream augmented.	
when poor syons dolefull state	
desolate	
sacked, burned, & enthrald	
And the Temple spoyld w <sup>ch</sup> wee	10
near should see	
To our myrthless minds we cal'd.	
Our mute Harpes, vntun'd, vnstrunge	
vp wear hunge	
on green willowes neer beside vs,	15
when we sittinge all forlorne	
thus in scorne	
our proud spoylers gan deride us.	
Come sad Captiues leaue y <sup>r</sup> mones	
and y <sup>r</sup> grones	20
vnder sions ruins burye:	
Tune y <sup>r</sup> harpes, & singe us lays	
in the prayse	
of y <sup>r</sup> God & lets be merry.	

Can? ah can we leaue our mones? 25

& our grones

vnder syons ruines bury?

can we in this Land singe lays,

in y<sup>e</sup> praise

of our God, & heer be merry? 30

No dear syon if I yet

doe forget

Thine affliction miserable

Let my nimble ioynts become

stiff & num, 35

To touch warblinge harpe vnable.

Let my tongue loose singinge skill

Let it still

To my parched rooffe be glewed,

If in either harpe or voice 40

I ~~rey~~ reioice

Till thy ioyes shall be renued.

Lord curse Edoms traterous kinde

bear in minde

In our ruines how they reuil'd, 45

sack, kill, burne they cryed out still

sack, burne, kill,

Downe w<sup>th</sup> all let all be leuel'd.

And thou Babell, when the tyde

of thy Pride, 50

Now a flowinge growes to turninge

victo<sup>u</sup>r now, shalt then be thrall

& shalt fall

To as low an ebb of morninge.

Happy he who shall thee wast 55

as thou hast

vs w<sup>th</sup>out all mercy wasted:

And shall make thee tast, & see,

what poor we

By thy meanes haue seen, & tasted 60

Happy who thy tender Barnes

from y<sup>e</sup> armes

of their waylinge mothers tearinge,

Gainst the walls dashe y<sup>eir</sup> bones,

w<sup>th</sup> their braynes, & blood besmearinge.

I.D.

3 far] fare B3357; absented] exempted O34. 4 our] mournfull B29427 B3357 B6930  
ORawl61 O34. 5 &] whilst B29427. 6 y<sup>eir</sup>] the C1; his] the B3357 B6930 ORawl61;  
stream] streames B27407 B29427 O34. 10 the] o<sup>r</sup> B27407, thy B3357 B6930 ORawl61.  
11 near] nere B27407 B3357, ne'are B29427 O44, neare C1 Oe13 O34 B-F, nea'r B6930  
ORawl61, Ne'r A; should] shall B29427. 12 minds] minde B29427 Oe13. 13-66 *om*  
B29427. 14 wear] we Oe13 B3357 B6930 ORawl61 O44 A-G. 15 on] vpon C1; neer]  
were B3357. 16 when] Where B27407 C1 Oe13 O44 A-G; all] so B3357 B6930  
ORawl61 O34. 19 mones] grones B27407 B3357 B6930 ORawl61 O34. 20 grones]  
Mones B27407 B3357 B6930 ORawl61 O34. 23 in] to B27407. 22 Tune y<sup>r</sup> harpes, &  
singe us lays] To your Harpes sing vs some Layes B3357 B6930 ORawl61 O34. 23 in]  
to ORawl61 O34. 25 ah] ô B27407, oh O34; mones] Grones B27407 B3357 B6930  
ORawl61. 26 grones] Mo<sup>a</sup>^<sup>a</sup>nes B27407 B3357 B6930 ORawl61. 28 this] y<sup>e</sup> Oe13  
B3357. 29 in] to B27407 B3357 B6930 ORawl61 O34. 31 syon] Salim B3357 B6930  
ORawl61; I] wee B27407; yet] faile B3357 B6930 ORawl61 O34. 32 doe forget] To  
bewaile B3357 B6930 ORawl61 O34. 34 my] o<sup>r</sup> B27407. 37 loose] lose Oe13 O34 A-G.  
37-38 *om* B27407. 39 To my parched rooffe be glewed,] Lett o<sup>r</sup> parched Tongues bee  
glued / To our Rooffes B27407. 41 I] Wee B27407. 42 ioyes] ioy B27407. 43 curse]  
plague B3357 B6930 ORawl61, blague O34. 45 ruines] Ruine B3357 B6930 ORawl61.  
46 sack, kill,] Kill; Sack, B3357 B6930 ORawl61 O34; kill, burne] burne, kill B27407.

48 let] till B27407. 51 growes to] comes a B27407, ffalls to B3357 B6930 ORawl61,  
 falles a O34. 52 shalt] shall B27407 C1 Oe13 O44 A-G. 53 shalt] shall B27407 C1  
 Oe13 O44 A-G. 54 of] in B27407. 55 he] Man B3357 B6930 ORawl61 O34. 55-60 *om*  
 B27407. 59 poor we] by Thee B3357 B6930 ORawl61, from thee O34. 60 By thy  
 meanes] Wee (poore Wee) B3357 B6930 ORawl61 O34. 61 thy] the B27407. 64 walls  
 dashe] Walls shall dash B27407 B3357 B6930 ORawl61 O34 O44 A-G, wall shall dash  
 Oe13. I.D.] ffinis. B27407, Martin Pierson: Ba: Mn: B29427, Iohn Donne. Oe13, Fr:  
 Da: B3357 ORawl61,finis./. Fr:D: B6930, D<sup>r</sup> Donne poem. p. 327.&. O44, *om* O34 A-G.

## Appendix 4

The following poem is printed by permission of the British Library from MS Stowe 962 (fols. 62v-63v). The transcription from secretary script is mine.

An Elegie on the death of the famous acto<sup>r</sup>  
Richard Burbage, who died 13<sup>o</sup> martij A<sup>o</sup> 1618:  
Some skilfull Limner healp me, if not soe,  
some sad tragœdian, healp t'expresse my woe,  
but oh hees gon, that could the best both limn  
& act my greife: & tis only for him  
that I invoke this straynge assistance to it 5  
& on the poynt call for himselfe to doe it.  
for non but Tullie, Tullies prayse can tell  
and as he could no man can act soe well  
this poynt of sorrow, for him non can draw  
so truly to the life this mapp of woe, 10  
that greifes true picture w<sup>ch</sup> his losse hath bread  
hees gon, & w<sup>th</sup> him what a world is dead?  
by him reuiu'd, now to obliuion goe,  
no more young Hamlett, old Hieronimo  
Kinge Leer, the greeu'd Moore; & more besides 15  
(that liued in him) are now for euer dead.



oft haue I seene him leape into a graue  
 suitinge the person w<sup>ch</sup> he seemd to haue  
 of a sad lover, w<sup>th</sup> soe true an eye  
 that there (I would haue sworne) he ment to die. 20  
 oft haue I seene him play his *part* in iest  
 soe liuely, that spactators & the rest  
 of his sad crew, whilst he but seem'd to bleed  
 amazed, thought, he then had died in deed.  
 oh did not knowledge check me, I should sweare 25  
 euen yet, It is a false report I heare,  
 and thinke that he that did soe truly fayne  
 is still but dead in iest to liue agayne,  
 but now this *part* he *actes* not playes, tis knowne  
 Others he played, but acted hath his owne. 30  
 Englandes great Roscius (for w<sup>t</sup> Roscius  
 was more to Rome, then Burbage was to vs?  
 how did his speach becom him? & his pace  
 suite w<sup>th</sup> his speech? & euery accion grace  
 them both alike? whilst nare a word did fall 35  
 w<sup>th</sup>out iust weight, weight to ballast it w<sup>th</sup> all.  
 hadst thou but spoke to death, & vsd the power  
 of thy inchantinge tongue, but that first hower  
 of his assault: he had let fall his dart,

& been quite charmed, by thy all charminge art. 40  
 This he well knew, & to p<sup>re</sup>vent this wronge,  
 first cuningly made seasure on thy tongue  
 then on the rest 'twas easie: by degrees,  
 the slender Iuie topps the talest trees.  
 Poetes, whose glorie whilome twas to heare 45  
 yo<sup>r</sup> lines so well exprest, hence forth forbear  
 & write no more: or if you doe let it be  
 in Commicke Scœanes, since Tragicke partes you see  
 die all w<sup>th</sup> him: nay rather sluce yo<sup>r</sup> eies  
 & henceforth write nought els but Tragœdies, 50  
 moyst dirges, or sad Elegies, & those  
 mornefull lamentes w<sup>ch</sup> may expresse yo<sup>r</sup> woes:  
 Blurr all yo<sup>r</sup> leaues w<sup>th</sup> blottes, y<sup>t</sup> all you write  
 may be but on sad black, & vppon it  
 draw marble lines, that may out last the sunn 55  
 & stand like trophees when the world is don.  
 Or turne yo<sup>r</sup> inke to bloud, yo<sup>r</sup> pens to speares  
 to pearce & wound the hearers hartes & eares,  
 enrag'd write stabbinge lines, that euery word  
 may be as apt for murder as a sworde. 60  
 That no man may surviue after this fact  
 of ruthles death, either to heare, or Act.

And you his sad companions, to whom lent  
 becoms more Lenton by this accident.  
 henceforth yo<sup>r</sup> wauinge flagg no more hange out 65  
 play now noe more at all, when round about  
 we looke, & misse the Atlas of yo<sup>r</sup> spheare  
 w<sup>t</sup> comfort, thinke you haue we to be there?  
 and how can you delight in playinge, when  
 such mourninge so effecteth other men? 70  
 but if you will hang't out, then let it weare  
 no more deathes coullers but deaths liuery beare  
 hange all yo<sup>r</sup> house w<sup>th</sup> blacke, the eaues it beares  
 w<sup>th</sup> Isicles, of euer meltinge teares.  
 and if you euer chance to play agayne 75  
 may nought but Tragœdies afflict yo<sup>r</sup> seane,  
 and thou deare earth that must enshrine y<sup>t</sup> dust  
 (by heauen now committed to thy trust)  
 keepe it as p<sup>re</sup>cious, as the richest mine  
 y<sup>t</sup> lies intombd in that rich wombe of thine, 80  
 that after times may know that much loued mould  
 from other dust, & cherish it as ~~dust~~ gold.  
 on it be layd som soft but lastinge stone  
 w<sup>th</sup> this short Epitaph engrauen thereon.

(That euery eie may weepe, & readinge weepe) 85

Tis Englandes Roscius, Burbage, y<sup>t</sup> I keepe./ *per Iohn ffletcher.*

## Appendix 5

The following poem is printed by permission of the British Library from MS Stowe 962 (fols. 47r-48r). The transcription from secretary script is mine.

The Earle of Southampton prisoner, and condemned. to *Queen Elizabeth*

Not to liue more at ease (Deare Prince) of thee  
but w<sup>th</sup> new merrittes, I begg libertie  
to cancell old offences; let grace soe  
(as oyle all liquor els will ouerflow)  
swim aboue all my crimes; In lawne, a stayne 5  
well taken forth may be made serue agayne.  
perseuerance in ill, is all the ill; the horses may,  
that stumbled in the morne, goe well all day.  
if faultes were not, how could greate Princes then  
approach soe neare god, in pardoninge men? 10  
wisdom & valour, common men haue knowne,  
But only mercie is the Princes owne.  
mercie's an antidote to iustice, & will  
like a true bloud-stone keepe them bleedinge still<sup>437</sup>  
where faultes weigh downe the scale, one grayne of this 15

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<sup>437</sup> The manuscript text clearly reads “keepe them bleedinge still,” implying that a “true bloud-stone” will continue the process of “bleedinge”—a surprising simile to accompany the speaker’s identification of mercy as “an antidote to iustice.” Quite likely, the copyist misread “their” in his copy-text as “them,” an easy mistake if he misunderstood the poet’s use of “still”; a “bloud-stone” was believed to halt the flow of blood (to keep “bleedinge still”), not to promote it.

will make it wise, untill the beame it kise.  
 had I the leprosie of Naaman  
 yo<sup>r</sup> mercie hath the same effectes as Io<sup>u</sup><sup>^</sup>rdan.  
 As surgeons cut & take from the sound part  
 that w<sup>ch</sup> is rotten, & beyonde all art 20  
 of healinge, see (w<sup>ch</sup> time hath since reve<sup>a</sup><sup>^</sup>ld)  
 lim<sup>bes</sup><sup>^</sup> haue beene cutt, w<sup>ch</sup> might els haue bin heald.  
 While I yet breath, & sence, & motion haue  
 (for this a prison differs from a graue)  
 prisons are liueinge mens tombes, who there goe 25  
 as on may fith say the dead walke soe.  
 there am I buried quicke: hence one may draw  
 I am religious because dead in law.  
 one of the old Anchorites, by me may be expest:  
 a viall hath more roome layed in a chest: 30  
 prisoners condem'd, like fish w<sup>th</sup> in shells lie  
 cleauinge to walls, which when they're open'd die:  
 so they, when taken forth, vnles a pardon  
 (as a worme takes a bullett from a gunn)  
 take them from thence; & soe deceiue the sprightes 35  
 of people, curious after roofull sightes.  
 sorrow, such ruins, as where a floud hath bene  
 on all my partes afflicted, hath bene seene:

my face w<sup>ch</sup> greife plowed, & mine eyes when they  
 stand full like two nine-holes, where at boyes play 40  
 and so their fires went out like Iron hott  
 and put into the forge, & then is not  
 And in the wrinkills of my cheekes, teares lie,  
 like furowes fild w<sup>th</sup> rayne, & no more drie:  
 mine armes like hammers to an anviell goe 45  
 vpon my brest: now lamed w<sup>th</sup> beatinge soe  
 stand as clocke-hammers, w<sup>ch</sup> strike once an hower  
 w<sup>th</sup>out such intermission they want power  
 I'ue left my goinge since my legges strength decayd  
 Like one, whose stocke beinge spent giue ouer trade. 50  
 and I w<sup>th</sup> eatinge doe no more ingrosse  
 then one that playes smale game after greate losse,  
 is like to gett his owne: or then a pitt  
 w<sup>ch</sup> shovels emptied, & hath spoones to fill it.  
 and soe sleepe visites me, when night'es halfe spent 55  
 as one, that meanes nothinge but complement.  
 horroure, & feare, like cold in ice, dwell heare;  
 and hope (like lightninge) gon ere it appeare:  
 w<sup>th</sup> lesse then halfe these miseries, a man  
 might haue twice shott the strayghtes of magelan 60  
 better goe ten such vioages, then once offend,

the Ma<sup>tie</sup> of a Prince, where all thinges end,  
and beginn: by whose sacred prerogatiue  
he as he list, we as we ought liue.

All man kind liues to serue a few: the throne 65

(to w<sup>ch</sup> all bow) is sewed to by each one.

life w<sup>ch</sup> I now begg, wer't to *proceede*  
from els whoso'er, I'd first chowse to bleed

but now, the cause, why life I doe Implore  
is, that I thinke you worthy to giue more. 70

the light of yo<sup>r</sup> countenance, & that same  
morninge of the Court favour, where at all ayme  
vouchsafe vnto me, & be moued w<sup>th</sup> my groanes  
ffor my teares haue already worne these stones.



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